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BLESSED JOHN EUDES.
Founder of the Order of Our Lady of Charity.

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THE ORIGIN

OF

THE ORDER OF OUR LADY OF CHARITY

OR

ITS HISTORY

From Its Foundation Until the Revolution

Translated from the French of Father Joseph Mary Ory,
Priest of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary

BY
One of the Religious of Our Lady of Charity of Buffalo, N. Y.

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Letter of the Very Reverend P. Le Dore, Superior-General of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary [called Eudists]

Nos cum prole pia benedicat Virgo Maria!

PARIS, December 15, 1890.

Reverend Father—

You have revealed to us the precious treasures that are enclosed in the archives of Our Lady of Charity, and which have been unknown up to the present, except in some houses of the Order. It will be a joy for all the Religious of this Institute to read in your beautiful work the history of those who were their Mothers, and whom you have presented us as their models. They will appreciate better the happiness of their sublime vocation, when they have found through you the place of honor their holy Order occupies in the Church of Jesus Christ. Filled with a just admiration for those elect souls you have made known to them, they will endeavor to emulate their virtue; and in remembrance of the heroism and the sanctity of Sisters M. of the Assumption de Taillefer, M. of the Infant Jesus de Bois-David, M. of the Nativity Herson, M. of the Trinity Heurtant, etc., they shall grow yet more devoted to those poor children, who seek them in their cloister, and here find a refuge and a shelter.

The glory of the Blessed John Eudes can only receive a new brilliancy by the publication of your work. You tell us, indeed, of His merciful condescension for repentant sinners, and you recount to us how he drew from the Sacred Heart of Jesus those sentiments of goodness and compassion wholly divine. But, at the same time you tell us of the obstacles that his zeal had to surmount, and the incessant battles that his constancy had to wage against others, in order to protect and strengthen the first steps of the new Order. By your simple recital, without pretension and rich in facts, you oblige the reader to cry out: Truly the Finger of God is there!

Your sweetest recompense will be to have shown in the virgins, protectresses and repairers of chastity one of the most admirable works of Catholic charity, and in their pious founder one of the most fearless interpreters of the mercy of the Heart of Jesus.

Deign to accept, Reverend Father, the expression of my thanks; and my heartiest commendation for your work, and the assurance of my most fraternal attachment in *SANCTISSIMO CORDE.*

ANGE LE DORE, *Sup. Cong. of J. and M.*

PREFACE

THE largest rivers at their source are, ordinarily, only tiny rivulets. They have scarcely moisture enough to cause a few flowers to bloom, or water enough to charm the ear by the gentle murmur of its flow. Further on a wonderful development is apparent, vegetation wild and magnificent, if not practically luxurious, grows upon the banks, inspiring the traveler who follows its course with involuntary surprise and lively admiration.

The study of the Origin of the Order of Our Lady of Charity gives the historian this double sentiment of astonishment and admiration. Spread through the world the *two hundred and ten monasteries which form the two powerful branches of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge, and of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, draw grace in abundant waves on over fifty thousand souls.

The common source is always the humblest, and as in this case, nothing foreshadowed the present marvelous development.

Permit us, Christian reader, to look back in order to demonstrate this, and give you a chance to contemplate one of those masterpieces of the supernatural power of grace, far more extraordinary than those offered to our observation by the greatest marvels of nature.

We have thought that this study will be both useful and agreeable to the children of the Blessed institutor. It is especially to them that we address ourselves. This work is. moreover, the fruit of an ardent love for the founder. We dare hope, then, that the reader may find herein a real source of edification.

The sources whence we have drawn our material are well known; they are:

1. From the Life of the Blessed John Eudes, by Reverend Father Martin, recently published by Monsieur L'Abbe Le Cointe.

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*At present there are nearly five hundred. The data herein is based on facts of 1891.

2. From the Annals and Flowers of the Order of Our Lady of Charity, placed by the most delicate courtesy at our disposal by the different monasteries, especially by those of Caen, Paris and Saint Brieux.

3. From the Annals of each House carefully conserved in Caen. These foundations, from the day they formally took possession, acquired a distinct life from the other houses, each forming an independent foundation. It is this characteristic that makes us consecrate to each a separate monography.

4. From the Annals of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, by Reverend Father Costil.

5. From the letters of the Blessed John Eudes to his daughters, to the Reverend Mother Patin, and other persons. Viewed without their historic frame, they seem difficult to understand; but placed in the midst of facts that have occasioned them, they have a most enlightening tendency.

No other document can make known in any such degree the difficulties overcome by the Blessed institutor, and the spirit he wished to give to the Order. Several, perhaps, do not appear to offer much interest. Their seal and the holiness of their author compel us to conserve them.

We must acknowledge that it will give us much happiness to see these humble pages facilitate the work of a more skilful writer in compiling for publication a more complete Life of the Blessed Eudes, of a life that may throw light on his heroic virtues, his qualities of founder and writer, and the fruitfulness of his zeal as missionary, and apostle of the Sacred Hearts.

The numerous letters inserted in this book have aided us already in making known under their different headings, and have contributed in augmenting in his children the respect, admiration and love which they have already had for his holiness and sanctity.

THE ORIGIN
OF
OUR LADY OF CHARITY

PART FIRST

From the Foundation to the Death of the Blessed John Eudes

1641--1680

CHAPTER I

LIFE OF THE BLESSED JOHN EUDES BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF OUR LADY OF CHARITY

THE seventeenth century has been one of the most illustrious in the history of France. The representatives of literature and of the arts have been widely quoted, and great army generals won brilliant victories; but the Church counted, during that age, perhaps a greater number of saints. They were needed to render effective the reforms decreed by the holy Council of Trent, and to repair the ruins accumulated during the many religious disturbances. Divine Providence raised up many. Under their saving influence the ancient communities regained their primitive fervor, and a multitude of co-laborers joined in their apostolate. Among the pious founders of this great century, the Blessed John Eudes, institutor of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, of the Order of Our Lady of Charity and of the pious Society of the Children of the Heart of the Admirable Mother, occupies distinctly the place of honor, as he was the first apostle of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, the first who had their feasts celebrated with all the solemnity that belongs to our own day.

This great servant of God was born on the 14th of November, 1601, at Ri, near d'Argentan, in the diocese of Seez, in the ancient province of Normandy. This modest village forms today the department of Orne. The childhood and youth of John Eudes are filled with traits of sweet piety such as we read of in the lives of the models of Christian youth. Like Louis de Gonzaga, Stanislas Kostka, and John Berchmans, in his fourteenth year he vowed his virginal soul to God by the vow of chastity; like them also, after his brilliant studies in the college of the Jesuit Fathers of Caen, he generously quitted all to give himself to God without reserve; more happy than they, he was able to continue his work and labors in the Lord's vineyard until extreme old age.

On the 25th of March, feast of the Annunciation (1623), he presented himself before Cardinal de Berulle, and was admitted to the Novitiate of the Congregation of the Oratory, then in its first vigor. It was this fact that determined his choice. Reverend P. Martine admitted that they had never seen a more faithful novice, nor one more faithful in working out his perfection, so exact to all his duties, and so obedient to superiors. He was ordained in Paris less than three years later, December 20, 1625, and on the Christmas following said his first Mass with the fervor that characterized him all his life. Alas! the Church where he celebrated Mass on that memorable morning is now used as a Protestant place of worship, but the altar was taken by Cardinal de Berulle and set up in his own house near the Louvre. The street still bears the name of the Oratory.

From that day the life of the Blessed John Eudes can be summed up by repeating one of his favorite maxims: "*Servire Deo et ejus Ecclesiae corde magno et animo volenti.*" "One must bring to the service of God and his Church a generous heart and a resolute spirit."

The pestilence which had ravaged his native country in 1627 furnished him with an occasion of proving his devotedness. He remained in the midst of the pest-stricken while the terrible scourge lasted, either in the vicinity of Seez, or at Caen. "The pestilence," he humbly remarked, "will not harm me, for I am worse than it." Truly God preserved his life for the great work he had before him.

The ignorance and immorality of the people, sad fruits of Protestantism and the wars that followed, made the missions most necessary. The Blessed Father was very studious; his talent for preaching, as well as his known sanctity of life, made him looked up to as a shining light among the missionaries of Normandy and Brittany. It is computed that more than 40,000 persons assisted at his sermons, and that wonderful miracles gave to his sermons an incontestable authority. Such facts are but rarely mentioned, even in the lives of the most celebrated apostles of the people. Not since the time of Saint Vincent Ferrier has any missionary had more ascendancy over the masses than the Blessed Eudes, and that he exercised even to the end of his life, as is proved in his last mission of Saint Lo in 1676.

This success in his labors prepared him for the foundation of his two Institutes, by the knowledge that he acquired of the needs of the clergy and people, by the legitimate consideration people had for his name, and by the useful friendships that he formed. In 1641 the providential instrument was prepared. We shall see how efficacious was the aid that he gave to the Church and souls.

It was little by little and without any determined plan that the Blessed Eudes was warranted to found the Order of Our Lady of Charity. He needed some one to help him, of a mind similar to his own, *Adjutorium simile sibi,* according to Holy Scripture. Indeed, nearly all the holy institutors of communities of women have been aided by another holy woman, submissive to her influence, but having, however, her own proper and personal bearing on the matter.

Helping Saint Benedict we see his sister, Saint Scholastica, with Saint Francis of Assisi there was Saint Clare, Saint Francis de Sales had Saint Chantal, and working hand in hand with Saint Vincent de Paul we find Mlle. Legras. The Blessed Eudes was all alone, and he had hardly begun the foundations of his work when its direction was snatched away from him. These considerations explain the difficulty attending the beginnings and the slow development of the Institute, but it also brings out more clearly his courage, his constancy, his generosity, as well as the self-abnegation of the holy founder.

In 1635 and the following years God gave extraordinary blessing to his works of zeal. He had the great consolation of snatching many souls from the demon, poor unfortunate girls who had been delivered over to the vices of a sinful life. Docile to the voice of grace and terrified at the dangers that their weakness laid them open to in the world, they begged him to give them a shelter where they could safely persevere.

Less misery would have touched the heart of this good Father. Yielding to their entreaties he placed quite a number with some pious persons, that were willing to receive them. One of them, Madeleine Lamy, lived in a small house in the suburbs, called Saint-Julien, of Caen.

This simple and generous lady devoted herself with enthusiasm to the instruction of those poor wandering sheep. But she felt that the present organization was a very imperfect one, and in that crude form they could not expect any stability for the work. When the Blessed Father came to visit the poor girls and help them by his wise counsels, as well as by his alms, she took it upon herself to enlighten him, endeavoring also to convince him that he ought to make the good more durable. It was certainly what he desired; but he would, perhaps, have delayed the execution of it without the vehement intervention of Madeleine Lamy.

One day the Blessed John Eudes, M. de Bernieres, treasurer of France, celebrated for his good deeds and works of piety, and M. and Mme. de Camilly, whose names shall figure frequently in this history, were passing in front of her house. Madeleine apostrophized them with a vivacity full of holy zeal: "Where are you going?" she said. "I suppose to the churches to feed on the statues; and then I suppore you'll be highly pleased with yourselves—think you are very devout. That is not the way to kill the rabbit. You would do better if you would build a house for these poor girls who will be lost for want of direction and resources."

The promenaders were at first inclined to laugh at the vehemence of the good Madeleine, but on reflection they were deeply impressed. Some time later another and not less lively challenge was indulged in by this pious woman, which had the desired effect on the Blessed Eudes and his companions. As the house of Madeleine Lamy was found to be too small to lodge all the Penitents that were applying, they sought a larger and more commodious dwelling. M. de Bernieres offered to pay the rent; M. de Camilly said he would contribute forty bushels of grain for their maintenance for the time being; other persons volunteered to furnish linen and the most indispensable furniture; and Madame de Camilly proposed to act in the capacity of econome.

The Blessed was facing a most difficult situation: the organization of a household and striving to obtain the necessary permissions from ecclesiastical and civil authorities. He went about his new duties with his ordinary ardor, and doubtless, to stimulate his energies and encourage him in his arduous task, God permitted that he did not meet, at first, too many difficulties.

CHAPTER II

SECOND ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE PENITENTS — MARGARET MORIN AND HER FIRST COMPANIONS — LETTERS PATENT — FOUNDATION OF A REFUGE AT ROUEN.— BEAUTIFUL LETTER OF THE LADIES OF MERCY

THE work undertaken by the Blessed John Eudes was not entirely new in the Church. Jesus Christ Himself commenced it when He declared that he came to save that which was lost; when he discovered to the poor Samaritan woman the infamy of her life, when he pardoned the woman caught in adultery, and admitted to the intimacy of His love the penitent Magdalen.

Those teachings and examples of the Good Shepherd have, at all times, excited the saints in seeking the wanderers from Christ's fold. We have many examples in the lives of the saints. In France, particularly, the work done for the rehabilitation of penitent women was extensive. In the principal cities, especially, places were reserved for their immediate use. Organizations varied very much: some of the Magdalenes (it was under this name that those establishments were best known) governed themselves, and in other instances they were confided to the direction of nuns of the different Orders.

These two methods of administration had grave inconveniences. On account of this proceeding the existence of those asylums was short-lived. What distinguished the Blessed John Eudes most was, that by founding the Order of Our Lady of Charity he became the practical organizer, the definite legislator of all those works of penitence and conversion. To that he bound his daughters. They may not abandon this work without grave infidelity to their vocation; their fourth vow binds them thereto, while it assures to them the graces necessary to fulfil this painful and laborious task.

Of all the labors undertaken by the servant of God it was this that cost him the most, and drew upon him unmerited contradictions. It was, perhaps, that which proved his heroism and eminent virtue.

Historians dealing with the life of the Blessed John Eudes seem to envelop the beginning of his labors as a founder in mists of confusion and other obscurities, and held to what they wrote for upwards of sixty years. We are giving what appears to us to be true, in the light of serious and continued study of what has been written.

The Blessed John Eudes, being still a member of the Oratory, and at this particular time superior of the House of Caen, paid a visit to Monsignor d'Angennes, who had occupied the episcopal see of Bayeux for over thirty-five years, to expose to him his projects. The Bishop received him very graciously. His Lordship approved his plans, and permitted him to open a chapel so that the needs of the Penitents would be amply supplied.

The Blessed Eudes asked and obtained the consent of the sheriffs of the city of Caen; it is even probable that he then solicited letters patent from the King at Paris. The union of the ecclesiastical and civil authorities rendered these formalities absolutely necessary. On account of these formalities being forgotten or neglected the House of Hennebont, as we shall see later, was suppressed.

The house chosen by him was situated on Saint John's street, near the Millet Gate, in front of the chapel of Saint Gratien. The projectors of the work went through the city questing for furniture and other necessary articles for the new house. Two lower rooms were separated by a grille or grating for a temporary chapel, and the grandest decoration they had in this poor sanctuary was a statue of the Blessed Virgin about fifty centimeters high, donated them by the Carmelites. It was a token of Mary's protection over this new-born establishment; later on we may have a chance to recount the miraculous favors and graces of which it was the instrument. It was religiously conserved during the bloody days of the Revolution, and today it holds the place of honor over the stall of the Reverend Mother Superior, in the convent of Caen, in the choir of the Religious.

After these arrangements were concluded, the persons that were to compose the new Community assembled there on the 25th of November, feast of Saint Catherine, virgin and martyr; some days later, on December 8, 1641, feast of the Immaculate Conception, the Blessed Eudes said Mass there, and after giving an exhortation to strengthen the Sisters and the Penitents in their vocation, he left the Blessed Sacrament in the poor little chapel. His *Memorial* contains these remarkable words: "In this year, 1641, God bestowed upon me the grace of commencing the establishment of the House of Our Lady of Charity, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Holy Virgin: *Deo Gratias!"*

He placed at the head of the establishment Mlle. Margaret Morin. After she had abjured Protestantism she gave herself up to the practice of good works of all kinds. By the advice of M. de Bernieres, another convert, one Mlle. Dieudonne, former lady-in-waiting to the Countess de Montgomery, joined her. These two had characters diametrically opposed to each other, so that they never agreed but to disagree. After a very short sojourn Mlle. Dieudonne resolved to dissolve partnership, and with very dignified composure she bade Mlle. Morin good-bye.

Margaret did not remain long alone; soon other conquests of the good missionary filled the vacant seats. On the eve of the feast of the Presentation, 1642, Mlle. de Saint Andre knocked for admittance, and a little later his little niece Marie Herson came, although only ten or eleven years old. The year following Mlle. de Taillefer, with two or three other young lady friends of hers, came as trophies of the great mission he had just completed in Valognes; all filled with an ardent desire to serve God and save souls. This seemed to promise well for the future.

Some authors claim that the Blessed Eudes wished at that time to form a religious community. It is certain that he prepared the house, as we have already stated, and endeavored to make it commodious for cloister purposes. Margaret Morin had fashioned a sort of monastic habit for herself and companions shortly after her entrance, but she could not don this garment without his consent, and as yet there had been no question as to what particular spirit would be the ruling guide to and for the new Community.

But a proof, which appears irrefutable, was found in the letters patent of Louis XIII. The indefatigable apostle was giving a mission at Saint-Lo, when he was called to Paris by Cardinal de Richelieu. This illustrious prelate wished to converse with him concerning the means necessary for the reformation of the clergy, and for the organizing of seminaries. The Blessed Eudes profited by his benevolence to obtain the letters patent for Our Lady of Charity. He then entered into conversation regarding the proper spirit to be inculcated in his Congregation. The idea of a religious Order was clearly expressed. The letters are as follows:

Louis, by the grace of God, King of France and Navarre, to all present and to come:

Concerning what has been represented to *us*, that some inhabitants of our city of Caen, with the consent of the Mayor and the sheriffs of said town, desire the establishment of a house, under the invocation of Our Lady of Refuge, for the reception of two classes of persons, to wit: girls and women who, after having led a scandalous life, wish to retire there for some time to amend their conduct, with liberty to leave when they choose; also ladies of unsullied fame, who are perfectly free, and moved by the desire of serving God and working for the salvation of souls, voluntarily seclude themselves in the said house—these, by the temporal goods which they may bring, will benefit a great number of the former; and knowing that the said young ladies may desire to consecrate themselves by the vows of the religious profession, under the Rule of Saint Augustine, such will greatly strengthen and augment said Institution and the said establishment, which the said town and neighboring places have already had visible tokens of the good done and the conversions wrought through those Religious.

Know, thereby, that *we*, for these causes and other like considerations, and desirous of contributing with *our* whole strength to whatsoever appertains to the glory of God, and the good of our subjects, have agreed, approved and confirmed, shall agree, approve and confirm, by these presents, signed by our own hand, the said establishment of the House of the Refuge, in our city of Caen; and have granted and conceded, shall grant and concede the same for all future ages; willing and pleased that this establishment of Religious, making profession of the Rule of Saint Augustine, be and remain under the authority and subject by obedience to our Holy Father the Pope and the Bishop of the diocese; for the direction and guidance of girls and women who have fallen into sinful habits, and who may, being touched by the grace of God, desire to spend some time in the house; with power to said Religious to build, and construct a church, house and other lodgings, proper and convenient to the requirements of said Institute, and according to said rule, form and method of the life led by the Religious of the Order of Saint Augustine, and that they can do likewise in other places in our realm, where they may establish themselves for a like purpose; and to this effect they may receive, take and accept from persons so disposed, endowments, bequests, inheritances, houses, rents, revenues and other such, movable or immovable, that may be given them, and that may be deemed necessary for said establishment; wishful that those Religious who shall be received in said house and those that succeed them, may enjoy these same privileges, immunities, exemptions and liberties that all the other Religious of the monasteries of the said Order and Reform established in our Kingdom, shall be the same as herein specified.

Here, we give and order our beloved and faithful counsellors of the Court and Parliament of Rouen, our Chamber of Accounts, in said city of Rouen, Presidents and Treasurers-General of France, the Bureau of Finance, established at Caen, and all others; our Chief Justices and officers belonging to them, that they read, publish and register these presents, and all therein contained, for the enjoyment and use of the said Religious, who shall be established in the House of Our Lady of the Refuge, in our city of Caen, fully, peacefully and perpetually, without suffering, now or in the future, any trouble or hindrance, for such is our good pleasure; and in fine, that this thing be firm, and forever stable, we have placed thereto our seal, all things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, in the month of November, in the year of grace one thousand six hundred and forty-two, and the thirty-third of our reign.

Signed: Louis.

On the fold
"By the King"
Signed: Sablet.
And sealed with green wax.
"At the side: *Visa.*"

The date of these letters, obtained less than a year after the reunion of the Community, does not permit of a doubt regarding the intentions of the good father, especially if we wish to recall that at that time all communities followed the Rule of Saint Augustine, and kept enclosure.

Reverend P. Costil in a letter, dated 1644, mentioned also a petition addressed by ten postulants of this house to Pope Urban VIII, the object of which was to obtain permission to make solemn vows; this naturally followed from the letters patent. Reverend P. Mannoury carried it to Rome on his first journey.

The choice and the reception of subjects was one of the projects. Every one mentioned this subject; naturally before entering they must be sure if the Community was a permanent one. It was the fear of not finding it likely to become permanent that made many—indeed, nearly all of them—abandon their vocation, one only excepted, Mlle. de Taillefer.

On account of many unsuccssful attempts the Blessed

Eudes had recourse to others, which he pursued and executed, notwithstanding the difficulties and apparently insurmountable obstacles.

After the installation on the 8th of December the zealous missionary departed to preach the Advent at Pont-Audemer. He left the care of his dear daughters to Madame de Camilly. The piety of this lady made her a precious counsellor on every occasion. Reverend P. Mannoury, who had become one of the first companions of the Blessed, was their ordinary confessor. The missions of Rouen and of Saint-Malo followed, almost without interruption, the Advent mission at Pont-Audemer.

His success at Rouen was wonderful, so the Archbishop named the Blessed Eudes superior of the missions of Normandy. In the midst of his great labors he never forgot his dear daughters of Caen. He even occupied himself with the founding, or rather, the perfecting of an establishment at Rouen, of the same kind, aided by the Ladies of the Mercy.

During that century many associations connected with charity were established. The Society of the Blessed Sacrament, partly founded, but especially directed by the pious M. de Renty, a devoted friend of the Blessed John Eudes, covered with its ramifications almost the whole of France for several years. The debating societies of Saint Vincent of Paul have copied and imitated his works of piety and zeal. Like them also, the Society of the Blessed Sacrament had to bear the brunt of the storm raised against them by the civil powers, and suffered consequently.

Besides this assemblage of gentlemen, there were also formed in several towns charitable associations for ladies of the world who proposed as their end the relief of all kinds of miseries. Saint Vincent of Paul was greatly aided by these reunions of both sexes. It was from these reunions that he drew his immense resources for the relief of the poor of those provinces that had been ravaged by the war.

These pious associations took different names. At that time one of those that had been founded at Abbeville, and had survived the Revolution, bore the beautiful name of Our Lady of Consolation. It is still very flourishing, and ladies of the very best families consider it an honor to attend its meetings.

Did the Ladies of the Mercy exist at Rouen prior to the mission given there in 1642 by the Blessed Eudes, or are they one of the fruits of his mission? We do not know; but it is not to be doubted that he confided to them the care of watching over and steadying the perseverance of the wandering sheep, brought back to the fold by his vehement sermons, and that swayed by the project of his foundation, he tried to have them imitate his Refuge of Caen.

The following letter, written in the midst of his missionary labors at Saint-Malo, proves it. We shall cite it in its entirety, as it will make known the elevated views that directed its author, and the spirit of zeal and charity with which he inspired his Religious. A stronger reason is, that the advice he gave was frequently the subject matter of his instructions to them, to sustain their courage:

JESUS, MARIA!

Ladies, my very dear Sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ, grace, mercy and the peace of this same Jesus Christ remain with you forever!

The zeal and piety that I recognized in you while I was in Rouen have so edified and consoled me, that I cannot thank our Lord sufficiently, and I beg Him every day in the holy sacrifice of the Mass to bestow upon you and yours His most holy benedictions, and to inflame your hearts more and more with the fire of His ardent charity. I have been at Rouen about three months, in the body, but I assure you that I am always in mind and heart accompanying you to the hospitals, to the prisons and to the homes of the poor sick, and I rejoice with our Lord and His most holy Mother, and your good angels, to see you persevere in such a blessed vocation.

Yes, my dear Sisters, you must know that by these holy actions you are rejoicing paradise, and you augment the accidental glory and joy of our good God. If you could understand the satisfaction and contentment you afford your good angels, when they see you thus occupied, doing what so many saints of both sexes have done before you—Oh, how happy would you be! Besides, you confound the spirits of darkness, and set hell at defiance. You draw down numberless blessings from heaven upon your city, your families, on your husbands, on your children, and on yourselves. You spread the odor of piety and give an example of virtue to the whole of France, an example which shall animate many others to imitate your charity; in fine, you are about to resurrect in the Church of God, the primitive spirit of sanctity which formerly flourished among the first Christians.

But the devil, who is enraged at all that is done for the glory of God, will not fail to throw discouragement in your path; thorns, not roses, will spring up to tear your purposes in twain; all your designs will get criticized; especially what you have done or intend to do for the House of Our Lady of the Refuge will be sifted by this determined hellish foe. Remember, Satan is desperate, for the souls are being snatched from his claws, but fear not; God is waiting for you at the bend of the road. He is watching the struggle, and He will bring you off victors. Now, my very dear Sisters, do not let the fury of this malignant spirit discourage you; he hates you, because you are working against him. The souls he seeks were bought by the precious Blood of the God-Man. This unhappy spirit sometimes employs thirty or forty years to cast a soul into mortal sin, in order to damn it. Do not complain, then, that you have no time, or that you cannot give as much attention as you ought, or that you have not means enough to help, and if you can only prevent one single mortal sin in your town you will be doing an incomparably greater good than if you saved it from famine or pestilence, or any other temporal evil imaginable, since one mortal sin is a greater evil than all the temporal evils of the world.

You ought to esteem yourselves happy, my dear ladies, that our Lord has given you the grace to employ a part of your temporal goods for this purpose, for which He has given His Blood and His life.

What happiness for you to be chosen by God to be associated with Him in this the greatest of His works, which is the work of the redemption of souls! To deliver a man who is a captive in the hands of barbarians is, indeed, a great and meritorious deed, but to deliver a soul from the servitude of Satan, is greater than if you delivered all the slaves that are suffering corporal tortures. If it is a thing so agreeable to God to use one's influence and wealth in building hospitals and houses for the relief of the sick, what manner of good is it, think you, to establish a house and a hospital for sick souls, and sick of an infernal pestilence which shall destroy them and many others, if there is no remedy?

There are so many hospitals everywhere for the relief of the body; is it not just that there should be some for souls, which are more horribly and more dangerously sick than a mortal body could be, and that persons who love God and who know how dear to Him are those suffering souls, pent up in mortal sin, are not more anxious to cure them and care for them, in preference to those sick of some transitory ailment? One soul is greater by far than a thousand worlds; and therefore, he who gains a soul to God does infinitely more than if he were to conquer a thousand empires. To give a corporal alms to an indigent person is a very commendable thing, and marvelously recommended in Holy Scripture, but to cooperate in the conversion of one soul, according to Saint Chrysostom, is far greater. Give to the poor all the gold in the world, if you have it, for the work in question *you* have both, the poor and the sick; therefore, give a corporal and a spiritual alms. God is pleased with charity and mercy, and He loves them so much that He has pronounced judgment without mercy to him who does not show mercy; and on the contrary, mercy without judgment to him who does the works of mercy.

Saint Chrysostom says that many persons are envious, and reasonably so, of those who fast and watch, wear haircloths and such other bodily penances, frequently performed by religious persons, and those who lead an austere and solitary life in deserts; but to deliver a soul from the possession of the devil and place it in the hands of Jesus Christ is a thing that surpasses all the austerities in the universe. We admire miraculous cures of the body, such as giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, life to the dead; but Saint Gregory the Great assures us that he who cooperates in the conversion of a soul performs a greater miracle than if he raised the dead. In a word, the most divine of all things, as says Saint Denis the Areopagite, is to work with God for the salvation of souls. It is the continual occupation of God. He employs all His thoughts, all His care and all the power of His divinity and humanity in this immense work. All the angels and all the great saints are occupied in this same work. It is the fruit of so many labors, so much sweat, so many tears, so much pain, so many fasts, so many privations, so much blood shed, so many holy actions and so many cruel sufferings in the life of the God-Man on earth, and in a life of thirty-four years, terminated for the same end by a death so strange and ignominious.

Do you not think, my very dear Sisters, it a great honor to have some part in a work so precious and divine? Ought you complain or spare or refuse a little of this earth for a subject for which God has given Himself? How shameful for a Christian soul if Jesus Christ would have to reproach him at the hour of death if he had consumed so much gold and silver that He had bestowed upon him so gratuituously, in feasting and banqueting, in balls, in play, in superfluous habits, and a thousand other unnecessary things, and refused to contribute anything to the salvation of souls, for whom He sacrificed Himself?

Let each of you, ladies, examine her conscience on this point, and if she finds herself culpable she should ask pardon of God, and promise amendment. The wealth entrusted to you is not simply for yourself, but for God. However much you have employed of it for the world and its vanities, you can now do better and expiate your sin. Henceforth, do as much for Him, to whom you owe all, as you have done up to the present, for His enemy, and your own. What you have employed for the world and Satan is lost, but what you give to Jesus Christ shall be returned to you a hundredfold in this world, and shall acquire for you life eternal in the world to come, according to the infallible promise of the Son of God.

There is not one among you who has not a very particular devotion to the most Holy Virgin, Mother of all purity; but remember that you cannot do anything more agreeable to her than to help maintain this poor little house, which is dedicated to her under the title of Our Lady of Refuge, because it is the place of refuge for her beloved virtue of chastity, that angelic virtue which is so terribly persecuted in the century in which we live.

When I began this letter I had no intention of making it so lengthy, but I believe that God wanted it so; so take all that I have said to you, not as coming from me. Read and re-read it, consider it attentively, and these instructions will be useful to you.

All goes well, thank God, in the House of Our Lady of Refuge of Caen, and I assure you that I received great consolation on my return, when I inquired how everything was progressing, for I found that God was being greatly glorified by the good order that was kept there, and by the care these poor Religious took in establishing in their midst, among the penitents, piety and fear of God, as well as keeping them employed. There are three persons in Caen, and not over-rich either, who help that house to subsist. Do then, I conjure you, my dear Sisters, as much as you can, temporarily, for those in Caen, and you will be blest for your charity.

I very humbly supplicate the Reverend P. Angelique de Gaillon to spare neither zeal nor piety in advancing the glory of our Master in this matter. If some difficulties or obstacles arise, take counsel and address yourselves to the Archbishop of Rouen, through the mediation of Reverend P. Touissant, the Vicar-General. I am quite certain that the ardent zeal of this worthy prelate, for the honor of the Church of God, and his zeal for the salvation of souls, will powerfully aid you in every way possible.

Above all, do not forget me in your prayers, for I am with all my heart, in Jesus and Mary,

Your very obedient and very humble servant,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

SAINT-MALO, July 16, 1642.

The Reverend P. de Gaillon, to whom the Blessed Eudes recommended his new Congregation, was, without doubt, an Oratorian like himself. The Reverend P. Touissant, who belonged to the family of Thebault, was Canon Penitentiary, as well as Vicar-General. He was buried in the Cathedral in 1660. During his later years he was very devoted to the needs of the Refuge. The following deliberation, consigned to the registers of the Hotel-de-Ville of Rouen, gives us a complete proof of this:

> On Friday, August 28, 1648, at the Bureau, before the Gentlemen * * * * Concerning what has been brought to our notice by the discreet and venerable M. Touissant Thebault, priest and penitentiary in the Cathedral of Our Lady of Rouen * * * * that several persons of that city, concerned by the disorders committed there by women of ill fame, who prostitute and corrupt others, mostly young girls, even go so far as to take them to the chambers of students and others, to solicit them to evil; they wish to put a stop to these sinful courses by extending charitable aid, offering for this purpose to contribute what is necessary for the establishment of a place where said women and girls could be taken in and reformed, to furnish household articles, such as beds and other articles that may be needed, without the said establishment becoming a charge to the inhabitants of the city, promising assistance in the maintenance, but those women must be enclosed, and those having charge of them must have some money given by persons that are willing, for the support of the said house * * * *

In consideration of this, the city donated them the castle situated on the rampart Cauchoix, near the insane asylum. Persons willing to extend charity were doubtless the Ladies of the Mercy.

This charitable work existed up to the time of the Revolution. It was definitely organized in 1655 or 1656 by Reverend M. Lambert de la Motte, one of the friends of the Blessed John Eudes. Previous to his becoming a missionary in China and Bishop of Beryte he was Counsellor to the Court of Aides in Normandy. He had devoted his life to good works, establishing his quarters in the hospital called "Hospital of the Poor Invalids," where he lived among them only to assist and comfort them. He brought from Troyes the Religious of the Refuge, and gave them the house of Rouen. In one of his letters the Blessed spoke of this installation.

CHAPTER III

FIRST DIFFICULTIES — INTERVENTION OF MARIE DESVALLEES — DEPARTURE OF MESDEMOISELLES DE SAING-ANDRE AND OF MARGARET MORIN, 1642-1644

THE new work did not enjoy peace very long. The demon, foreseeing the great detriment this establishment would be to the extension of his sinful empire, did not wish that it would prosper so readily. The Blessed Eudes clearly perceived the coming storm, even before his departure for Saint-Malo. The would-be critics, though his one-time friends, said to him with great seventeenth century wisdom:

"Your plans are truly beautiful and laudable, but you will never accomplish anything of the kind. Nothing is more weak and inconsistant than those poor creatures. Their bad propensities, strengthened by long habit, will compel them to succumb to the disorders of their former life."

The Blessed father understood well that it would be a difficult task to burst the bonds that bound them, and would bind them to their vicious habits, but he would do all in his power to strengthen their will to persevere, so he replied:

> I shall not regret any trouble I may have to undergo, if I can only succeed in liberating one soul from the thraldom and meshes of impurity. Evangelic workmen must plant and water, but it is God that will give the increase. Our Lord did not say to His Apostles: "Go, and convert the whole world," but, "go, teach all men the great truths of salvation," reserving salvation to the force and unction of His grace. I am working for the glory of God, and trust He will take in hand His own cause, and bestow upon my endeavors the best means of succeeding. My only fear is that my sins may put an obstacle to the designs of God on these souls.

The demon, seeing how well the establishment was progressing, notwithstanding the ruse he made use of, cast about him for another attack; this time he made use of some libertines who had been balked of their prey, through the efforts of the Blessed; he represented to those debauchees that their enjoyment had been interfered with, and they should retaliate by incensing the public mind against the new work. They arose in a body and fought hand in hand with the spirit of all impurity, like the libertines of our own day.

Listen to their talk, just what we hear around us now: "Wherever we look we see only convents; they'll soon own the whole city. What need has Father Eudes of Penitents? What does he want with a Refuge? What good are convents? Can't they do penance in their own homes, as well as in a Refuge? . . ."

They went so far as to declare that it was not lawful to found such houses without letters patent. They succeeded in persuading the Mayor and the sheriffs, and the establishment would really have been closed were it not for the fact that the letters patent were produced to their utter discomfiture. These were the letters of Louis XIII, of which mention was made in the preceding chapter.

The extreme poverty of the Community was a difficulty no less great. It was especially felt during the absence of the founder. When he was in Caen he quested for his dear sheep-fold. During the mission of Saint-Savior-le-Vicomte, the econome, Mme. De Camilly, found her finances growing very short—nothing to fill her purse, nothing could be bought, so she wrote to him declaring in what straits she found the Community. He responded:

> Continue, my dear daughter, to put your confidence in God, and be assured that our admirable Mother will take care of her children, and send them all that is necessary; but it is well to feel the weight of the cross: it is our glory and our crown.

Shortly after this response was sent, the Blessed Eudes made a trip to Coutances to see Sister Marie Desvallees, and ask her intercession with God for his daughters and their immediate needs. It was then that Sister Marie Desvallees received from the Holy Virgin an inspiration to give eight hundred livres, her whole fortune, and immediately yielding to the inspiration and his prayer she handed the entire sum to him.

The following letter, written by the Blessed to M. and Mme. de Camilly, gives us some details regarding this truly providential succor, as unexpected as it was prompt. Besides, it will show his unceasing solicitude for the new Institute, and his doctrine on the Holy Communion, very different, indeed, from that which was being preached by the Jansenists:

JESUS AND MARY!

My very dear Brother and Sister:

Your letter just received. May God be blessed for the fervor of our Lyonese gentlemen, and of Repichon! Be so kind as to ask M. Dubuisson when he comes to Bayeux how the affair is getting on. M. de Lyon wrote that it was fairly good, but if there be any haste required send M. de Notre-Dame; confer with M. Dubuisson, if you please, and see what can be done between you.

Rejoice, my dear Sister, and do not be afraid to communicate as frequently as you have been accustomed to, for every soul that is clothed with divine grace is always in a proper disposition to receive Holy Communion, even if the senses are devoid of that sensible devotion and those divine consolations that one dearly loves to feel; we should remain satisfied, even if we are in great dryness and poverty of devotion.

We shall pray every day for you, and for all your affairs. I wrote you by the last mail: Our admirable Mother has promised to give a penny to her daughters who are, you know, our Sisters.

She called it a penny because it was not an enormous amount, and of this penny she sent me today two hundred livres, which sum I have in my possession; I do not know if there will be a penny left, nor by what means I can send it on to you. If M. de la Mare or some other person were going to Caen, he could bring it along. However, we shall decide quickly.

Make use of this sum according to your discretion and your immediate needs. I'll bring it at Easter if I do not find any other way of sending it.

March 5, 1644.

This is the first time that the intervention of Marie Desvallees has been mentioned in this history. We will find many others quite as extraordinary. Hence, a few words concerning this remarkable woman will not be out of place.

This pious woman was born at Saint-Savior-Lendelin, diocese of Coutances, on February 18, 1590. Her parents were in easy circumstances, and gave her a good Christian education. As nearly all the inhabitants of the country, at that period, were ignorant of the most essential truths of religion, and what was more unfortunate still, the priests showed themselves, especially in that particular parish, unworthy of their high calling. But preventing grace filled the heart of this child in a marvelous manner, and in the midst of such unfavorable circumstances she grew in the practice of all virtues. The holy Spirit inspired her especially with what was in those times a rare virtue—the beautiful virtue of purity.

The most cruel trials of childhood overwhelmed her in her early years; the death of her father reduced her to the extremest poverty, and shortly after, her mother married again. Beggared by poverty, she was in still worse straits by the brutal conduct of her stepfather. He beat and ill-treated her in every way possible, with unheard-of cruelty. Her unalterable patience and charity seemed the only defense she raised, and proved her coat of mail against his unmanly treatment. No complaint issued from her lips; inwardly she prayed for her tormentor.

To remove from him these occasions of violence—which was herself—she concluded to seek a home elsewhere. She changed her abode, but imagine the shock to her virginal soul when she perceived that it was a house of ill-fame; visions of the trail of the serpent met her at every step. The sufferings she endured here are beyond description. She soon quitted the place.

However, it was only the beginning of her life-long martyrdom of soul. When she was about nineteen years old she became the victim of witchcraft, and was possessed by the devil. Competent witnesses bear us out in this stage of her career—the Archbishop of Rouen, Monsignor de Joyeuse, and his coadjutor, Monsignor de Harley, the Bishops of Coutances, Monsignors de Brizoy, de Matignon, Auvry, and a great number of the secular and regular clergy, all being distinguished by their erudition and piety.

In the following the reader will have ample opportunity to accept or to deny the reality of such occurrences. But if he is tempted to deny them, we can only remind him of the persons that were possessed, and had been delivered by our Lord, by His Apostles and His saints. We might mention the many possessed persons of Loudun, and we can also say that diabolical manifestations have been more numerous in other ages than in ours. The prince of devils varies his schemes; sometimes he concentrates them on certain localities, again on certain towns, and oftenest in Masonic lodges. Therefore, it would be most unreasonable to deny his activity over certain of the human race. It is very conformable to the Providential law that rules us. Humanity, deprived of religion and religious influences, gradually falls under the ignominious yoke of Satan, and he in turn makes it feel the rigor and full weight of his authority.

Diabolical possesion is always exterior, if it is not voluntary; the person being in the state of grace does not prevent this. It can be even a trial of the most heroic virtue, as was the case of Sister Marie Desvallees.

"I am certain," she said, "that I am not given over to the demon; it is God who has permitted this for my humiliation, because His divine knowledge shows Him that this state is most advantageous for my salvation; for infinitely good as He is, and nothing being impossible to Him, He would allow me to pass through a different way if it had been better for me. I accept this trial with all my heart, assured that it has been permitted through the infinite love He bears me. My life and death are in His hands. I would not change my condition with the greatest queen of this world."

Thus submissive to the divine Will, the progress that Sister Marie made in the most arduous ways of perfection astonished all who could penetrate into the deepest recesses of her heart. Her union with God became sublime. The revelations made her by our Lord and His holy Mother are known to us only through her adversaries the Jansenists, and the mutilated accounts they left, though badly distorted, show beauty of the first rank. How grand and sublime would it be, then, if the authentic relation was given, which in obedience to the Bishops of Coutances, had been given to the Blessed John Eudes! It was in obedience to those prelates that he charged himself with her direction, in the year 1641, after his mission in that city. It was also to have a better knowledge regarding her extraordinary state that he gathered and put in order all that concerned her. This conduct was only an imitation of what the directors of Saint Teresa had done, and had counselled to be done in her life, written by herself.

The writings of the wise director of Marie Desvallees were an exact reproduction of her condition, to which were added some observations, or rather an explanation, the judgment being reserved for the ecclesiastical authority. His role was only that of a faithful and impartial witness.

Sister Marie prophesied things regarding Our Lady of Charity, all of which were realized. Her influence over the foundation of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary was considerable. Everything showed that she contributed exceedingly in strengthening the Blessed in his resolution of propagating th devotion of the Sacred Hearts. However, we must return to the Foundation of our Lady of Charity.

Finding a suitable house was not even so easy as that of getting the daily maintenance. The following letter dealing on this subject was written by the holy founder. It shows the importance that he attached to the approbation of the Holy See:

JESUS AND MARY!

My very dear Daughter:

I was in hopes that I would receive a letter from you by today's mail, so as to learn what your sentiments are concerning M. de Montfort's house, but instead received only a line from Father Mannoury, announcing his arrival; I suppose you thought he would write me, instead of you. He told me that himself and Reverend P. Jourdan went to inspect the house, and found it quite serviceable. According to his statement I have concluded that we ought to purchase it. It is quite near the Oratory, but that does not matter. However, I shall leave all that to your good judgment. Am sending you Father Mannoury's letter; read it attentively, if you please, and weigh the contents; it seems to me worth due consideration. I supplicate our good Mother to inspire you accordingly * * * * If you think it well, you might write to M. de Bernieres about the part that M. Patri has taken.

We will make a Novena for our business in Bayeux, and for the Bulls for our Sisters. For this purpose we will say every day once the *Veni Creator,* once the *Memorare,* once the *Ave Maria, filia Dei Patris,* twice the *Monstra te esse matrem,* and twelve times these inspired words of Sister Marie Desvallees: *Sancta Maria, mater Dei, virgo qui data est omnis potestas in coelo et in terra, fiat nobis secundum tuum;* that is to say, be it done according to your promises. I pray you to join your prayers to those of our dear Sisters, without mentioning anything about the Bayeux affair to them, which ought to remain a secret. I am asking the same favor of dear Father Jourdan. Recommend them also to Mother M. of Saint Joseph, to the poor and to the Visitation * * * *

Without there being any indication of the precise date of this letter, it appears to have been written from Coutances in the year 1644. The affair of Bayeux, of which he spoke, seems to relate to the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

But the heaviest cross came from the interior of the Community. The Blessed Eudes had taken the greatest precautions in admitting subjects. On March 23, 1644, he wrote to Mme. de Camilly:

> I have no time to write to any one but yourself. Tell M. de Bernieres to make sure of the house. If he needs any one to vouch for him, I think MM. de Notre Dame and Finel would oblige him.
>
> See our dear Sister Margaret, too, and tell her that the Nehou girl is in very poor health, and it would be imprudent to receive her, as she would be a charge upon the house. For the one in Caen, what you propose would be considerable; nevertheless, you better defer her reception until my return. Meantime, I leave it to your good judgment and your good will. Only I beg you will consider this young person's application with an unbiased judgment. See if she is resolved to renounce her own will, if she has zeal for the salvation of souls, if she has a good temperament, and if she is sound in mind and body; for we must be very careful as to the persons we receive, and have them thoroughly examined. Above all, we must be cautious not to receive any one who has a worldly spirit, is self-opinionated, or one that has a haughty, proud disposition * * * *

These qualities were not found in all those that had been admitted. Miss Morin, in particular, had not these qualities. Born in the bosom of Protestantism, she was sincerely converted, it is true, was very enthusiastic, but had kept underneath all that sincerity some of the pride that gave birth to that hersy. Certain it is that towards the end of 1642 division broke out in the house. Mlle. de Saint Andre was the butt of her jealous temper, especially on account of the worldly goods that she wished to give for the foundation. She went away discouraged. She regretted this step all her life, for she loved her vocation. At her death she bequeathed three thousand livres for the benefit of the Penitents. She was soon followed by the sister of Mlle. de Taillefer and her two friends who had accompanied her from Valognes.

The many and protracted absences of the Blessed, necessitated by the needs of his Congregation which he was just planning, aggravated the evil. And as misfortune loves company, he was obliged to change the confessor, Reverend P. Mannoury, who was kept very busy with the formation of the seminary, and his choice fell upon one of his companions, who found in this employment the loss of his vocation. He, it seems, entered into the views of Mlle. Morin, and approved her design of giving to the Institute rather the spirit of the Ursulines, than that of the Visitation, which the founder desired to establish. Mlle. Morin, taken up with charity, showed herself very discontented, and formed the design of leaving the house, and taking her companions with her. She followed out her design. All left, with the exception of Mlle. de Taillefer and the niece of the Blessed Eudes. This plain was not so secretly carried out but that he was warned.

He went to the house with the design of quieting the ladies. But he was forbidden to enter. It might have been possible to overlook some of the wrong-doing of Margaret Morin, but to deny the blows and slaps she gave to Mlle. de Taillefer was impossible. Her conduct in this matter could not be ignored, nor tolerated by the Blessed Eudes. He speaks of it himself in his letter to this persevering young lady:

JESUS MARIA!

My very dear Daughter:

I supplicate our Lord and His holy Mother to be your strength in this affliction and in this temptation. I am extremely sorry, and have I not reason to be so, seeing the souls that God sent me, whom I cherished beyond measure, in such anguish, and in great danger of losing their vocation and falling into the claws of the infernal wolf, without a chance for me to help them by my presence, as I am not allowed to see them, or of putting things right?

Certainly those who have hindered me from doing my duty ought to fear the judgments of God. I implore Him with all my soul to show them mercy; as for you, my dear daughter, I conjure you in the name of God, to do nothing until I have spoken with you! Have a little patience; this struggle will pass, and be persuaded that in a few days you will be rejoiced and consoled as much as you are now downcast and afflicted. Consider, my dear daughter, that it is through me that Divine Providence is addressing you, and wishes to make use of me to draw you to the fulfillment of His designs over you. Hence I pray you, in the name of our Lord and of His holy Mother, to grant my request not to leave the house until I have spoken with you.

About the other one: do not believe that I chased her from the house. It is not true; for I always said, and I say still, that if she wished to live under obedience she would not be so rebellious at what I said, but would submit as she should, and then it would have been easy to live in the house. If she did leave, it was not because I ordered her, but by her own wilful disobedience. So I beg you once more, my dear daughter, to have a little patience; the storm will soon blow over; nothing will be left—scarcely a little smoke. What I say to you I say to all my dear Sisters, whom I love with the tenderness of a father. Tell them all I have said to you, and you shall be doing a deed very agreeable to God.

Place yourself for a moment at the feet of the most sweet Virgin Mary; give yourself to her, and ask for strength. She is your true Mother; she will never abandon you.

Your very affectionate father,
JOHN EUDES,
Priest of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

This letter shows the paternal goodness, as well as the cruel alarms of the Blessed. It had its effect on the heroic Mlle. de Taillefer; but it only hastened, perhaps, the execution of the designs of Mlle. Morin and her companions.

As they had given to the house what little they had they considered that the furniture belonged to them, so they carried it away during the night. They probably thought, if it was not theirs, some compensation was due to them.

Margaret Morin remained some years at Caen as matron of the Hospital of the Petit-Renfermes. It was a dependency of the ancient Hotel-Dieu destined for poor children of both sexes. In this employment she enjoyed the full confidence of M. de Bernieres and of the Vicar-General, Reverend M. de Bernesq. In 1652 she founded, with Marie de Bosq, the Charity of Bayeux, and made her profession on June 1, 1657, and died there in the odor of sanctity October 1st of the same year. If she committed some faults in her conduct towards the Blessed P. Eudes, God gave her, in answer to his prayer, a great good, and made her instrumental in the foundation of another Community which is today even in a very flourishing condition.

Her departure from Our Lady of Charity took place shortly after the Lent of 1644, when the holy man was preaching at Coutances; for his letter, dated the 23rd of March, to Mme. de Camilly certainly designated Margaret Morin as being yet at the head of the establishment. She was for the founder one of the greatest trials of his life. The fruit of many sacrifices and other good works seemed lost. The numerous adversaries that arose against the foundation of the Congregation were triumphing, and did not fear to say that in like manner all his enterprises would fall to the ground. In the midst of the tempest, when the waves of adversity seemed ready to sweep all his expectations into space, he stood apparently oblivious of the storm; his heroic constancy made him mighty in his humiliations.

Besides, Sister Marie Desvallees seemed to have been charged with the task of preparing him for this heavy cross. Some time previous, speaking of this house, she remarked, in the spirit of prophecy, that of all those who had entered, only one would remain.

* * *

CHAPTER IV

THE BLESSED JOHN EUDES SAVES THE WORK BY OBTAINING THREE RELIGIOUS OF THE VISITATION

AFTER this sad event became known the holy institutor went to the house accompanied by Reverend P. Mannoury, and applied himself with all the vigor of his mighty zeal to find a remedy for so great a desolation. Mlle. de Taillefer was not so cast down as might have been expected, but seemed more anxious to persevere in her vocation. She saw herself charged with the guidance of the Refuge; and while she was engaged in exterior work her little companion, Marie Herson, the niece of the Blessed J. Eudes, remained with the Penitents. The first time that her uncle saw her with them he turned aside to his companion and said in a low voice: "Behold a little lamb in the midst of wolves." He addressed a touching exhortation to the little Community, and one for the Penitents, encouraging them by his well-chosen words, to persevere. He told the Sisters they should take the resolution to attain peace by overcoming their miseries.

However, several friends of the Blessed Eudes remained faithful to him in this cruel trial. He assembled them to take counsel with them and deliberate on the best means of saving the work. Some of them re-echoed the old objections. One said: "Your intentions are good, Reverend Father, and without doubt God will bless you for them, but success! well, that's doubtful. There is too much weakness, too much fickleness in the sex, and it would be the height of imprudence to place any reliance on them, in regard to conversion having any solid results." Recent facts gave great force to this objection, but the confidence that the virtue and prudence of the holy founder inspired permitted them to propose some new plans.

These consisted in asking the Religious of the Visitation to form the novices who would come to the house, and in having the Religious bound by vow, to consecrate themselves to this particular work of zeal. By so doing inconstancy would be avoided. The spirit of Saint Francis de Sales appeared the most desirable from every point of view.

The members of this assembly were united on this score; the only difficulty would be in the Religious of another Community. Would they care to take part in this work, which was such a delicate undertaking? This was a fear partaken by them all. Two centuries of experience was necessary to dispel this sentiment entirely. The Blessed responded to the members of the assembly by placing before them the precautions that they could easily take:

"The Religious appointed to this employment shall be chosen with care; they shall have their exercises and their Community life, entirely apart from the Penitents; there will be no relation between them, beyond instructing them, and watching over them during manual labor. Besides, God will never permit that the Religious devoting themselves to the salvation of souls, through love for Him, shall ever be lost. His goodness and justice forbid it."

Every time that this formidable question was raised he made the same answer, and always gave it new force. It was from these reasonings that he drew his indomitable perseverance in his enterprise. It is not to be doubted for a moment that he had very special interior illuminations on this subject. He expressed his convictions with such force that he persuaded his friends to accept his views. His two friends were Reverends M. Rocher and M. de Bernesq, Doctor of Divinity and Vicar-General of Bayeux, and also the Religious of the Visitation. All, with great confidence in God, resolved to attempt a new trial.

Monsignor de Angennes, Bishop of Bayeux, was the most difficult of persuasion. To the request that the Blessed J. Eudes made to him he returned a decided refusal, based on the same objections; and to show that his resolve was irrevocable he decided to remove himself from the place in order not to give him an opportunity to renew his petitions. He went and hid himself in his Priory of Moutiers. The ascendancy that the Blessed exercised over him, by reason of his great virtue, ended by convincing him, and he sent his consent July 30, 1644, by the following letter:

My Father:

Since you, M. de Bernesq and the Daughters of the Visitation find it well to send some of their Religious to direct those of the Refuge, I agree with you, although my sentiments are highly repugnant to this concession. If those they send there are not very wise, very prudent, and have great qualities of mind and heart, in order to resist evil, we run a chance of losing two houses, instead of saving one. I pray God with my whole heart that nothing wrong may occur. I hope that the experience that yourself and M. de Bernesq have of the government of said monasteries, and the conduct of the Superior of the Daughters of the Visitation, will remedy all these inconveniences that I fear so much. I pray God with all affection that as we have undertaken these affairs for His glory He may assist us with His graces. Continue to pray for me, if you please, and believe me, my father,

Your very affectionate brother and servant,

JAMES, *Bishop of Bayeux.*

As a consequence of this permission, the Religious of the Visitation sent two Sisters to take up the government of the house, on August 16, 1644. The determining motive was the esteem they had conceived for the Blessed for a long time past.

In the midst of this long trial, God sustained the work by extraordinary means. Mme. de Camilly, who had rendered so many services, had now her moments of discouragement. Every one failed her; she ended by asking if a house exposed to so many tempests had the blessing of God, and if it had, would so many afflictions befall it? She told her feeling concerning the condition of the house to Sister Marie Desvallees, and the Blessed Virgin in one of her communications to this lady deigned to vouchsafe her the following advice, to transmit to Madame de Camilly: "I shall answer my daughter by actions, and will make known to her that my Son and I desire earnestly that this particular work shall exist." These words awoke courage in the heart of this pious lady. We realize today, more than ever, the significance of these words.

Another vision regarding the essential end of the Order took place in the chapel of the same house, in the month of August, about the time the Visitandines came there. On her return from one of her pilgrimages to Our Lady of Deliverance the good Marie prayed there for this poor Community. The divine Mother appeared to her, and charged her with this consoling message:

Say to my daughters from me: A queen has a family of young princesses. One of these young ladies, unfortunately, unhappily wandered away, and fell ill with some loathsome infection. Some charitable persons took her in, took off her mud-stained, filthy garments, washed her, gave her new white linen, clothed her in silken robes, and brought her back to her heart-broken mother. I ask you, what form that mother's gratitude ought to take? You may imagine to what lengths that noble queen would go to prove how much she owed those faithful servants! But for them, her daughter must have surely died. But all those erring souls are my children. I love them more than any mother in the world can love her children. The sin of impurity is the foulest infection. What joy, then, do they give me when a soul is snatched from this loathsome disease; when, purified by the salutary bath of penance, they stand forth clothed and ornamented by all virtues! Tell my daughters, then, that all their actions, even the smallest, done for those poor wayward children of mine are most agreeable to me.

This recital is quite true, and shows in its best light the end of the Institute, and has come down to us from history.

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CHAPTER V

THE REVEREND MOTHER PATIN—HER GOVERNMENT—FIRST RESULTS — TAKING HABIT OF SISTER M. OF THE ASSUMPTION DE TAILLEFER —CEREMONIES OF CLOTHING — FERVOR OF POSTULANTS

THE superior designated by the Bishop of Bayeux, Monsignor d'Angennes, was the Reverend Mother Margaret-Frances Patin. She was well prepared for this important mission. Born at Beauvais in 1600, her childhood was remarkable in many ways. Her piety drew the eyes of many upon her, especially those of her own household. She consecrated her virginity to God by a vow of chastity when she was only twelve years old. According as she increased in years she developed the most beautiful dispositions; sweet and charming was the influence she exercised over her companions. She gave a thousand proofs of her charity towards every one, and especially towards the poor. In the early morning she was ever ready to carry the little delicacies her mother gave her to her poor friends. Her modesty was so delicate that she made a vow to recite the Rosary every day if the Holy Virgin would obtain for her the favor that she would never be seen in bed by any of her young relatives that were living in the same house with her. The most advantageous offers of marriage were distinctly refused by her, and she asked her parents to permit her to retire to the Convent of the Ursulines of Amiens, there to continue her exercises without distraction. After her return to her home her mother, anxious to keep her with herself, proposed to found an Ursuline Convent at Beauvias. By the advice of her confessor she chose to enter the first Monastery of the Visitation at Paris. Five or six years after her profession her superiors judged her capable of directing the foundation of Dol in Brittany. The death of the Bishop, shortly after her arrival in that town, made her give up that house, and Mother Patin, with her Sisters, joined those who, in 1631, had been established by the Visitation of Caen. She was the second superior, and having been deposed from that office she exercised that of Mistress of Novices, when she was sent to the Charity. This obedience threw her into a world of trouble; all the difficulties of a new foundation, and especially the foundation of a new Institute, presented themselves to her mind. The thought of having to direct the Penitents caused her the bitterest repugnance. Her submission to the will of God, and her obedience to her superiors aided her in overcoming all her apprehensions, and she went where Divine Providence called her, taking with her two other Religious, Sisters Marie-Charlotte de la Rue and Elizabeth-Angelique le Comte. This monastery, knowing of the extreme poverty of the House of the Refuge, had the generosity to give them two hundred livres for their immediate wants.

Mother Margaret Frances Patin

According to Fathers Costil and Martine it must have been about this time that the name of Our Lady of Charity was adopted. But this is a mistake. In the letters of Monsignor d'Angennes the house was always called the Refuge, and in the other Acts the appelation varies. The change was made by the desire of M. de Langrie, and did not become definite until after the foundation of the Institute. The change of name was made by degrees, and long after it had been given officially several persons made use of the former title.

According to the Annals, the interpretation of the wording of the Bull of Alexander VII is as follows: *Our very dear Daughters in Jesus Christ, the Religious of the House of the Refuge, called of Our Lady of Charity.* One of these titles seems to indicate the object of the work, the other the name of the Congregation. Accepting this interpretation, we shall only remark that this Bull, like the letter of Monsignor de

Nesmond, which he promulgated, gave it officially the name of the Order of Our Lady of Charity.

The Reverend Mother Patin applied herself at first to pacify every one, and her prudent behavior succeeded in restoring peace where there had been unrest and trouble. She endeavored to form to the religious life all the subjects she found there, as well as those that Providence would send her.

But historic veracity compels us to say that she labored especially for the Visitation. To the nuns of that Order, so dear to her, she sent the very best of the applicants. She acknowledged this herself in a letter she wrote after her return, in which she also relates what the Holy Virgin said to her on showing her her fault.

This trial was a keen one to the zealous founder. He saw the one on whom he had counted so much destroy little by little the edifice that he wanted to build. Nevertheless, in his correspondence or in his actions there was not a trace of complaint visible, nor even a shadow of disagreement; all that time he worked in perfect accord with Mother Patin, in everything pertaining to the most necessary regulations. The Rule of Saint Augustine and the Constitutions of the Visitation were adopted, in principle. Later he would enter more minutely into the observances peculiar to the employments of the new Institute. He applied himself especially to answer the objections of Monsignor d'Angennes by the wise rules he gave for the Penitents. It was this that made him establish such a complete separation, and take so many precautions. The refusal of the approbation of Rome would be for him a new motive to take precautionary methods for their direction, and for the preservation of the Religious in charge.

It was also about this time that the religious habit for the Sisterhood was under discussion. After having prayed much and consulted several persons of eminent piety, among others Sister Marie Desvallees, he decided that they should be garbed in white. The robe, cincture, scapular and mantle should be white. This spotless garb would recall to them the great purity they would make profession of, and the zeal with which they should be animated in order to inspire it in the souls confided to their care. A blue cross was to be placed on the inside of the robe. This was to remind them of the sufferings endured by our Lord for their salvation and that of poor sinners, and it ought to excite in them the desire to support generously the crosses attached to their vocation. The blue or celestial color is to show them that heaven will be the recompense of their labors.

The holy founder wished also, that they would wear attached to the neck a silver heart, on which is in relief the image of the Holy Virgin holding the Infant Jesus, with a branch of lilies on one side and a branch of roses on the other. It was the very first time that there appeared on a religious costume a symbol so significant of the devotion of the Sacred Hearts. The cross of the Visitandines bears also an engraved heart, but it is only secondary. For the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity it is heart shaped. Jesus and Mary ought to live in the hearts of all Religious, and their hearts must be ornamented with that chastity which is symbolized by the whiteness of the lily, and spread everywhere the good odor of Jesus Christ, signified by the perfume of the rose. Such was the symbolism that the Blessed frequently inculcated in his exhortations to his daughters. The monastic form and the simplicity of the costume render it very imposing.

The first ceremony of the taking of the habit took place on February 12, 1645. Mlle, de Taillefer, and one other young lady, who did not persevere, received the habit for the first time in the history of the Order. The constancy of this heroic postulant merited this honor. History does not tell us if the Blessed Eudes had the joy of presiding at this ceremony. We may imagine that he had, seeing that no letter is extant by which he might have sent his congratulations to Sister M. of the Assumption. If he had not been present he would surely have written, as he did some years later to his niece.

The taking of the habit was made a very solemn affair in the Charity. Many of the external ceremonies are similar to those in use in the Order of the Visitation, except those concerning the difference made as regards the habit; but nearly all the blessings and prayers recited by the officiating priest are the composition of the founder, and special to the Order The demand made by the postulant, and her responses have been also retouched and modified. His spiritual exhortations are everywhere taught to his daughters from their entrance into the religious life.

At the hour chosen for the reception the entrance of the Community into the choir is made processionally, each Sister carrying a lighted taper, except the postulant who comes last, clothed as a young bride. She wears the livery of the world, in order that by the stripping off she would show the contempt she feels for it, and the completeness of the liberty with which she does it. While the Sisters sing the *Ave Maris Stella* the novice kneels before the grate or grille, conducted by the Reverend Mother and another Religious, to signify that, under their direction, she would climb the rugged steep that leads to perfection, and arrive with them to the portal of eternal bliss in heaven. The choristers sing the versicle:

Ora pro nobis, Mater aeterna Charitatis,
Pray for us, Mother of Eternal Charity,
Ut digne efficiamur charitate Christi,
That we may become worthy of the charity of Christ.

And the priest in the prayer asks that, by the intercession of Our Lady of Charity, all her actions be done in charity, and through a motive of charity. Then he blesses the candle, asking God to enlighten His humble servant at the moment when she is quitting the world, as He enlightened Moses on his departure out of Egypt, in order that she may arrive in the land of promise of eternal felicity.

The candle is then given her to remind her that Jesus Christ must be, henceforth, her light and her strength.

The celebrant then demands of Jesus, Light of the world and splendor of the glory of His Father, to enlighten His little servant and fill her with His love, that she may know what is agreeable to Him and perform it with all her strength. If the preacher thinks over the prayers used in this ceremony he will find a theme for his sermon, both varied and abundant.

The Holy Sacrifice and the sermon over, the celebrant entones the *Veni Creator;* then, after having sung the *Oremus,* he comes to the grate, and there a dialogue takes place between himself and the novice which is touching in its simplicity.

The CELEBRANT: My daughter, what do you seek?

The POSTULANT: My father, I humbly ask you to give me the habit of this holy house, and the favor of being put to my probation in the practice of Christian virtues, and in the observance of the holy Constitutions. One thing only have I asked of our Lord, and that I will never cease to ask: that I may be allowed to dwell in the house of our Lord, and of His blessed Mother, all the days of my life. I have loved the beauty of God's house, and the place where His glory dwelleth.

I have chosen humiliation, poverty and mortification in the house of the Lord, rather than to dwell in the tents of sinners.

CELEBRANT: Blessed be the Author of all good Who hath inspired you to make so good a choice, to take the Lord for your portion and your inheritance. Better is one day in the house of the Lord than a thousand elsewhere. Blessed are they who dwell in the house of the Lord; they shall praise Him forever and ever. Listen, then, daughter, and give an attentive ear to the words of the Holy Ghost: Forget thy people and thy father's house, that you may draw down the favor of your heavenly Spouse. Do you persevere in your request?

POSTULANT: Yes, father, I do persevere, and I repeat my request, hoping, through God's infinite goodness, for grace to remain faithful to Him, and to know and to do His Divine Will in this holy house.

After this response the celebrant rises and asks of God, for the novice, that His handmaid would always will what He would inspire her to do, and give her the grace to accomplish it. Then blessing her again prays the Lord to strip from her the old man with his vices and acts, and clothe her with the new man in justice, and holiness, and truth.

While the postulant is unrobing, and being clothed in the garb of Religion, the celebrant solemnly blesses the habit. The symbolism of the formula recalls that our Lord clothed Himself with our nature through love for us, and that through love for Him we ought to renounce the pomps of the world, and clothe ourselves with humiliations, in order to partake in a blessed immortality.

The choir sings, during this time, the canticle of David, *Quam dilecta tabernacula tua,* enumerating the delights of the house of the Lord.

On her reentrance into the choir the postulant wears a white robe, her head covered with a little veil; she advances to the grate, and there, in a voice low and tremulous, but sweet withal, sings those beautiful words that express so well what she has come to do:

"*Regnum mundi et omnem ornatum saeculi contempsi propter amorem Domini nostri Jesu Christi.*

"The kingdom of the world and all earthly vanity, I have also despised for the love of Jesus Christ our Lord."

All her new Sisters reply with the conviction of sweet experience;

"*Quem vidi, quem amavi, inquem credidi, quem dilexi.*
"Whom I have beheld, Whom I have loved, in Whom I have believed, in Whom is my delight."

This scene, so touching and so inspiring was simply the work of the piety of the Blessed founder. Spectators, seldom moved on such occasions, are often observed to shed tears when assisting at a reception in the monasteries of Our Lady of Charity.

The celebrant then prays for the postulant, asking God to make her an acceptable sacrifice, and most agreeable to His Divine Majesty to purify her from the corruption of the world, and render her worthy of the new life that she must now lead in religion.

The novice then kneels before him, and receives the scapular. She kisses it, happy to bear the yoke of the Lord. The veil is a symbol of modesty. He invites her to hide her life with Jesus Christ in God. The Rosary is a mark of her consecration to Mary. The long white mantle recalls that the virgins that follow the Lamb Without Spot shall be clothed in white, and follow Him withersoever He goeth. The celebrant, then, with all solemnity possible, gives her a new name, in the following words, that impress the audience with no little curiosity, so anxious to know the new name; they hear it also with deepest sympathy mingled with emotion:

"He that shall overcome, saith the Lord, shall receive from me a new name. That you, my daughter, may be encouraged to fight victoriously with the devil, the world, sin and self, behold, a new name He gives you: you shall henceforth be called Mary NN. Prove yourself ever the humble servant and worthy daughter of the august Virgin whose name you bear."

The Blessed John Eudes wished that all the Religious of Our Lady of Charity should bear the name of Mary; this on account of his intense devotion to the Holy Virgin. They have joined to the name of Mary the name of a mystery of our Lord or of the Blessed Virgin, or of a saint, to distinguish them from each other. This usage was established from the very first ceremony, but was not borrowed from the Visitation. Mlle. de Taillefer was called Mary of the Assumption. The first Sister that received, in the Order, the name of Mary of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was Mother Bedault, professed of Rennes and first superior of Vannes. Her clothing coincided with the institution of the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in Rennes, in the year 1670, or about that time, since she made her profession when the Sisters of Caen arrived to regularly constitute this first foundation. This appelation has become quite common in the Charity, and in many other religious communities. But we may seek in vain for another such example previous to this time. The Blessed John Eudes took the initiative in making use of this expression regarding the devotion to the Sacred Hearts.

After the giving of the name the priest prays a last prayer over the new novice, asking for her all the religious virtues. They then retire to the choir of the Religious, where the young Sister receives the kiss of peace, while they sing the *Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum* and the psalms *Laetatus sum in his quae dicta sunt mihi. Levavi oculos meos in montes.* The procession then re-forms, and the choristers entone the *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes* and the joyous *Alleluia;* thus the novice is conducted solemnly to the novitiate to sign her reception to the habit.

We do not think this ceremonial was yet in existence when Sister M. of the Assumption received the habit. But this is positive, that at that time the Community, such as it was, was deeply imbued with the true religious spirit, that abnegation, hatred of self, renunciation of the world, and all other virtues formed the characteristic trait of those first nuns of the Institute. The novices were so fervent that no sacrifice seemed too great or too painful for them. They had such a love of obedience that the superior was obliged to study her orders before giving them. The immortification of our day hardly allows us to comprehend the mortifications those generous souls imposed upon themselves.

About this time the Community moved to the street called the Jacobins, to the house that M. de Bernieres had located for them. It was built of wood, covered with a simple plastering, and was so freezingly cold in winter that their bread froze on them. These inconveniences, joined to their extreme poverty, made the good Sisters only more fervent and happy. However, one day Mother Patin was without provisions, and had not a sou in her slim purse. She became quite shaky in her confidence in God; forgetful for the moment, like any poor child of Adam, she, in the next moment, was shocked at her discouragement, and casting herself on her knees at the foot of her crucifix she cried out: "My God, if it is your will that I serve you in this place make it known to me, and give me the means for this Community to exist. And, oh, I beseech You to pardon my silly murmurings." This prayer was scarcely finished than, yielding to a secret inspiration, she opened the drawer of her table and found there twenty livres, the existence of which was inexplicable. Another time a can of oil was almost exhausted, and they had no money to buy any. To their joyous astonishment next day they found it quite full enough to last at least for two months. At sight of these prodigies their hearts overflowed with gratitude, and filled them with renewed courage.

CHAPTER VI

FIRST STEPS TAKEN FOR THE APPROBATION OF THE INSTITUTE — LETTER TO POPE INNOCENT X—TWO USELESS JOURNEYS OF REVEREND P. MANNOURY TO ROME

THE Blessed father, full of respect for the Holy See, wished from the very beginning of his foundation to give them a solid basis by obtaining for them the approbation of the Sovereign Pontiff. His new Congregation of Jesus and Mary was exposed to many persecutions. He sent the Reverend P. Mannoury to Rome to obtain its confirmation, and to solicit at the same time that for the Order of Our Lady of Charity. The pious founder asked for this occasion the letters of Monsignor d'Angennes to the Sovereign Pontiff Innocent X, and this good prelate gave them to him as soon as they were ready. They were of great importance, as they unfolded his views regarding the different functions of the Order. Hence, we shall reproduce them here in complete form:

To Our Most Holy Father Pope Innocent the Tenth, James d'Angennes, Bishop of Bayeux, who humbly kisses his feet:

MOST HOLY FATHER—As the duty of the episcopal office, and the express order of the Divine Will charge us with the care of his lambs, it demands also that I apply myself with all my power to the salvation of the flock entrusted to me, laboring not only to cure the diseases of those actually in need, but also to cut off the least sprouts that could prove fatal in the future—diseases that spread the more easily as long as they are neglected at the beginning; I believe that I ought principally to show myself zealous in attacking the shameful intercourse between the sexes, a vice that, like pride, infects a great number of men. And as experience teaches us, it is a vice that is most difficult to cure in women, especially when they are hardened in crime; but it may happen, sometimes, that a ray of divine light pierces through the gloom that surrounds them, and though they may be furlongs deep in sin, and their falls numberless, this ray of light shows them the depths of their degradation, and they are touched with sorrow, and anxious to regain that peace which they lost by their bad habits; but on account of the lack of that charity that should hold out a helping hand to bid them arise and sin no more, and because there is no place where they may go and do penance for their misdeeds, and flee the occasions of their sin, they are like sheep without a shepherd.

In view of this, most holy Father, and to prevent such disorders, and by the initiative of several persons of the city of Caen, which is in my diocese, I have had established for over four years a house which the King has been good enough to confirm by his letters patent, under the title of Daughters of the Congregation of Our Lady of the Refuge, where these notorious characters are received with a view to their conversion. Their admission must be voluntary, those by whom they are received being ladies of fair fame, who feed, clothe and instruct them, besides edifying them by their saintly lives. When they prove by their conduct that their conversion is solid, and they desire to return to society, those in charge endeavor to give them a chance to better themselves, either by an honest marriage or being placed at service under some pious lady.

The sweet odor arising from these many acts of charity has smelled to much advantage in the nostrils of several ladies of piety, distinguished both by birth and breeding, as well as by their wealth, for they have formed the design of entering the said house, with the view to endow it with their worldly goods, and there to apply themselves to the instruction of the said girls and women of ill-fame, provided it please your Holiness to permit them to do so, after a long trial of their fidelity in acquitting themselves of the pious exercises marked out for them, also to make the three ordinary vows of religion, to which they may add a fourth which regards, particularly, the end of the Institute, where they propose to instruct, for some time as the case may be, those persons of their own sex whose chastity may be in danger, as also girls and widows who are heretics, and who desire to be converted to the Church—a thing that cannot fail, because there is no one else to facilitate this step for them. Otherwise, they are constrained to remain in heresy, fearful of the ill-treatment, sure to follow their conversion, of the parents and relatives, or of the sad consequences of poverty that would overtake them when abandoned by their families.

It is also proposed by us, besides these two classes of persons—those of notorious character, and those infected with heresy—to add a third, supposing always that your Holiness gives the desired sanction, to wit: of ladies of fair fame and of good birth who aspire only after perfection, and to engage themselves in the monastic state, or who desire to be received as boarders in order to avoid the pitfalls of a corrupted world, and of working out their salvation. For this house is to be like a holy college, where there are different classes in which ladies of fair fame or honest girls, as they are sometimes called, give lessons of piety to different persons, according to the difference of their condition and their needs.

But all these pious designs would fail, absolutely, on account of the fickleness of their sex, unless they are bound by the sacred ties or bonds of the vows of religion. Moreover, it is to be remarked that all those favoring this establishment are willing to do so only on condition that it become a religious Community. Many of them desire to enter, hoping to be able to consecrate themselves to God, and wish to contribute to the work what wealth they possess for the maintenance and support of the class of persons aforementioned.

Hence, I supplicate most humbly that your Holiness may be pleased to permit those young girls and widows who have already entered, and all those that may enter in said house, wishing to become Religious, to make, after they are judged capable, the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and a fourth of *charity* and of *instruction* in regard to the aforementioned persons of their own sex, who wish to be converted from vice or from heresy, all to be under the Rule of Saint Augustine, and having Constitutions conformable to the said Institute, but without the obligation of sin; that all follow the rules that shall be prescribed them either by myself or other enlightened persons, under the name and title of the Congregation of Our Lady of the Refuge, and under the entire and full authority, guidance and protection of myself and my successors.

But since the professed Religious of this Institute will be obliged to take great care of those persons that shall be confided to them, and that the employments and functions of their Order will not permit them to be occupied a long time with choir psalmody, I supplicate your Holiness to please to dispense them from the recitation of the Breviary and from the grand Office, imposing on them instead, the recitation only of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin in choir as a precept, and in particular, when for some legitimate cause, they must be absent.

Given in our Priory of Moutiers, in Perche, under our signature and the seal of our arms, and countersigned by our Secretary, this third day of January of the year 1645.

JAMES, *Bishop of Bayeux.*

In this letter prepared by the Blessed he indicated three classes of persons to whom the house would give asylum:

1. Those who wished to change their lives. This is the direct end of the Institute, the immediate object of the fourth vow. A House of Our Lady of Charity without Penitents is like a school without scholars.

2. Persons who wish to be converted from heresy. At that time, especially in Normandy, where Protestantism made

great havoc, a case of this kind was of frequent occurrence. Very often, to facilitate the return of those deceived souls to the Church, it was incumbent on interested friends to take them away from the dire influence of their families and their former coreligionists. It was under these conditions that, shortly after, Madame Balde and her young daughter were received, and became herself, sometime afterwards, one of the strongest pillars of the Institute. At that time under the influence of Louis XIV, who pursued with wonderful perseverance the desire of religious unity to arrive more surely at political unity, he founded in the principal cities of France special homes for new converts. Monsignor Servien established one in Caen, and shortly after ceased to receive them. In heretical or infidel countries this beautiful work, so conformable to the designs of the Blessed, may be always taken up with advantage.

3. The lady boarders who, without embracing the religious life, wish to remain there living a pious retired life. The histories of all the houses have shown this institution in full exercise up to the Revolution. Very often it was their principal resource; even in our own day several convents receive them. The Blessed Eudes had seen the good results that could be obtained, and kept up the idea.

Thus his houses became veritable hospitals for all needy souls; those who were the worst off had the first place, and this absorbed all the activity of his daughters.

The Reverend P. Mannoury met the most powerful adversaries of the Blessed Eudes in Rome on his arrival there, as well as those he left behind him in sunny France. In fact they rendered useless all his attempts in regard to the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, as well as for Our Lady of Charity. He left Rome in the month of April, 1646; the Blessed showed himself perfectly submissive to the will of God and full of confidence in the future, notwithstanding the lack of success by which his enemies triumphed, or rather his good friends, as he charitably named them.

God took care of him and sustained him, as well as all the benefactors of the house, by the extraordinary lights that He gave regarding the future to Sister Marie Desvallees.

The Blessed Virgin made her the following promises, about this time, which we shall see were realized:

I desire that you tell your brother from me that I have given you these two promises. The first is that my Son and I myself shall give several pieces of gold to found the Congregation of Missionaries, and several pieces of silver to establish that of the Daughters of Charity. She then proceeded to explain this figure of speech. The pieces of gold are pious men who shall enter the House of the Priests; the pieces of silver mean that We shall send good postulants to the House of the Daughters. The second promise is for the temporal needs: these two houses shall always have more than will be necessary; let them expect, then, with patience, the fulfillment of my promises.

On his side, the Blessed Eudes neglected nothing that could contribute to the consolidation of his work. As he had given to the Sisters the Rules and Constitutions already approved he consulted four doctors of the Sorbonne to know if the Bishop of the diocese could, before getting the approbation of the Holy See, receive the establishment, and permit them to make the three ordinary vows of religion, and a fourth simple vow, that of employing themselves in the functions of the Institute. The reply of the doctors was affirmative. There remained only to conform themselves to what we see so often practiced in our own days in all the new Congregations.

At the same time he solicited the letters of institution from the Bishop of Bayeux, as he was not yet dead, as had been reported at Rome. The request was addressed to this prelate in the name of five postulants: Catherine Leroux, Anne le Haguais, Reine de Taillefer, Barbe Eustache and Marie Herson. Monsignor d'Angennes gave it a favorable reception, but to conform to the legislation then in vigor he asked for the consent of the city, writing on the request:

This is to be communicated to the Mayor and sheriffs of the city of Caen, with a view to their reply of consent. We expect that it be reasonably satisfactory.

Given at Bayeux in our episcopal palace, this 24th day of August, 1646.

This formality offered great difficulties. At the beginning the Blessed J. Eudes obtained a verbal consent, but it was insufficient when there was question of a solid establishment. Some of the sheriffs were very unfavorable to the work of the Blessed founder, and were more or less deluded by his adversaries. These men used every strategem to oppose the erection of th new Institute. On account of all these machinations of the devil on one hand and his enemies on the other the man of

God was a long time before he could obtain his demands. Finally, after much deliberation, the citizens consented to authorize the establishment by an authentic Act, dated December 20, 1646. While they were in session, the Blessed John Eudes, full of anxiety, knelt at the door of the assembly hall recommending the success of this affair to our Lord and His holy Mother, with all the ardor of his soul. It is difficult today, notwithstanding all the red tape existing laws subject one to, to understand the importance attached to those letters in those far-off years. However, they were the effectual means by which the house was saved from utter ruin, in the frightful tempest that raged at the time, as we shall see later.

The Blessed Eudes then took the request that his daughters had drawn up, and that had been addressed by them to the prelate, the letters of the King, and the consent of the City, as well as the decision of the Doctors of the Sorbonne, and presented them himself to the Bishop of Bayeux. The prelate accepted them, and in a letter dated April 11, 1647, prayed his Vicar-General to construct letters of institution in conformity with the present documents.

M. de Bernesq, the Vicar-General, did as the prelate told him, but the death of the Bishop occurred before he was able to sign them. He died May 16, 1647. This sad occurrence delayed the cause, and exposed the Institute to long and very cruel trials.

The multiplicity of these proceedings did not absorb all the activity of the indefatigable missionary. He continued his course of sermons.

In 1646 he preached three missions in the diocese of Bayeux: At Thorigny, at Beny and at Lyon, near the Deliverance. In the last-named parish he celebrated the feast of the Holy Heart of Mary, October 20th, and was assisted by two new brother priests, the Reverends Finel and Le Mesle. The following year he preached at Nogent-le-Rotrou and at the Ferte-au-Vidame in the diocese of Chartres, then at Fouqueville in the diocese of Evreux. During these labors the holy founder prepared the second journey of Reverend P. Mannoury to Rome. Just as in the first journey, so it was in the second; always his thoughts ran towards the approbation of the two Institutes. He went again to Paris, and solicited letters of recommendation. The King gave three for Our Lady of Charity; one for his Holiness, Innocent X, a second one for

Cardinal d'Este, and a third for M. de Fontenay, ambassador near the Holy See. The Reverend P. Mannoury wrote to his superior about the month of October, during the Ferte-au-Vidame mission:

> It seems to me that it is necessary for us to get another letter from the Nuncio. I dare not ask for it, afraid of seeming too importunate. I have spoken so many times with him, and he has made so many significant remarks, that I do not dare to ask him for this letter, which is a recommendation for Our Lady of Charity. He has been informed *de fundatione* and *de commodo;* he has approved the letters of the King and of the Bishop, but it is essential that we have a letter to attest the good results of the establishment.
>
> Personally, not knowing the results, I dare not press the matter. M. de Renty could do so. Ask him to write to Rome, and to his friends, in favor of our Sisters. In this important transaction we have much need of protection.

To understand the powerful influence of M. de Renty we need only recall that he was president of the Society of the Blessed Sacrament, of which we have already spoken. This society had many ramifications in the French colony in Rome.

The Reverend P. Mannoury made use of the influence of the brother of the Blessed, M. Eudes de Mezeray, Historiographer of France. Around the feast of All-Saints, 1647, taking all his documents with him, he directed his course on foot, as he did the first time, towards the Eternal City.

The Blessed Eudes strove then, by every means possible, to procure for the Religious of Our Lady of Charity the same advantages as his own Congregation, and Reverend P. Mannoury, his right hand in this foundation, corresponded in all things with his superior. His letters, says Reverend P. Martine, show him arrived at Rome, passing from hope to fear, according to the persons that addressed him or the objections they submitted to him. The principal objection was always the difficulty, seemingly insurmountable, of permitting chaste virgins to be occupied with the conversion and direction of the Penitents. Finally, Reverend P. Mannoury, after having obtained important favors for the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, wrote to his venerated superior, June 8, 1648:

> For the affair concerning Our Lady of Charity there is absolutely nothing to be hoped for at present; every way possible has been attempted; we must have a little patience. They have given some hope that it will be done; even the design has been approved; but we must wait for the reasons that I have mentioned.

The Reverend P. Mannoury did not wish to expose himself, and incidentally the Order, to a formal refusal. If that had happened it would be exceedingly difficult to return another time to the Roman Court. He wisely judged that time would dissipate the prejudice conceived on the subject of the relations of the Religious and the Penitents. He left Rome about that time, and rejoined the ardent preacher and his brethren in the diocese of Soissons, for we find his name among those of the missionaries of the Fere-en-Tardenois. The Blessed gave two missions in that diocese, after those of Autun and of Beaume in the same year.

We may note in passing that he had the feast of the Holy Heart of Mary solemnly celebrated on February 8, 1648.

The expense of the two journeys of Reverend P. Mannoury to Rome were covered by the Blessed Eudes alone. It was, then, very wrong, when later the counsellors of Mother Patin persuaded her that the disinterested founder wanted to turn to his own profit the journey of Reverend M. Boniface to Rome, which was paid for by Our Lady of Charity. His correspondence completely disproved this accusation. The Congregation of Jesus and Mary, after having paid in full the expenses of Reverend P. Mannoury, would have had at least a right to this compensation. For nothing would hinder Reverend M. Boniface from seeking the approbation of the two Institutes, as Reverend P. Mannoury had done.

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CHAPTER VII

NEW TRIALS UNDER MONSIGNOR MOLE—DISINTERESTEDNESS OF THE BLESSED INSTITUTOR — TWO OF HIS LETTERS — LETTERS OF INSTITUTION OF MONSIGNOR MOLE— CONTRACTS OF FOUNDATION OF M. DE LANGRIE

If the affairs of Our Lady of Charity were not on a good footing in Rome they were yet more compromised in France. Bishop d'Angennes was hardly dead when the Religious of the Visitation of Caen proceeded to a new election for a superior, and chose Mother Patin. They were too well acquainted with this good mother. Her virtues, her merits and her talent for administration were all well known to them, and they did not and would not consent to sacrifice so precious a member of their Order, for another monastery. Perhaps they also wished to take her away from the innumerable embarrassments of an establishment so crossed from the very beginning. She was unanimously elected at the Ascension, 1647.

Seeing herself elected canonically, Mother Patin believed it her duty to accept the charge imposed upon her by her Sisters. The letter she wrote after her return to the Charity permits us to believe that she was not sorry to leave a house where she had suffered so much, and whose future left much to be desired.

The loss of so holy and so able a superior threw the little Community into great consternation. Under her government it had begun to taste peace and rest. It is true that Mother Patin sent in her place Mother Catherine-Theresa of Saint Germain; but either the new superior had not the same talent for administration, or she could not gain the confidence of the Sisters in the same degree as Mother Patin, or more probably on account of the bad state of her health, order gave place to disorder in the Community; dissensions and other sad results were the outcome. Perhaps also the repeated absences of the founder contributed to this state of things, in some measure at least. It may be well to observe that he probably did not know they had a new superioress. Any letter to that Mother has not come down to us.

At that time, too, poverty in all its grewsome colors afflicted the Community. Two able sharpers succeeded in defrauding them of eight hundred livres. Indeed, all they had, so the Religious found themselves little by little stripped of everything—no provisions, without furniture; it went even so far that they had not a chair to sit on. The winter was an exceptionally cold one; they had no wood for firing, save one dead tree that lay beaten down by the storm at the foot of their garden, which the landlord allowed them to use, and—think of it, you people of today—that was all the firing they had to heat a house full of cracks and deep fissures, where the wind whistled in its fury, shaking it on all sides. The novices and postulants had not sufficient courage to stand a life like this; some of them returned to their families; the best ones had followed Mother Patin to the Visitation. This venerated Mother told later on how the Blessed Virgin reprimanded her for having favored this change in the Community.

However, it seemed to be conformable with prudence. These interior trials were nothing compared to those that menaced the existence of this poor little house. Monsignor Mole was named Bishop of Bayeux towards the end of 1647, and even before he was consecrated declared himself opposed to the Blessed Eudes and his works. The Seminary of Caen and the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity did not appeal to him as being regularly established, and he did not hide his intention of doing away with them altogether.

Consecrated on February 14, 1649, this prelate took possession of his see in the month of June following. Soon after he closed the seminary chapel, and when they asked him to allow Sister M. of the Assumption to make her profession he absolutely refused, and, moreover, said he would never permit it. This decision being noised abroad discouraged the Religious of the Visitation.

In one of her visits to the Charity, Reverend M. Patin found Mother Saint Germain in very bad health, and thought it her duty to remove her and place Mother Margaret de Foy, her niece, in her stead. In view of all the opposing elements to the erection of a new institute, in France as well as in Rome, this superior and her Sisters resolved to go back to their monastery, and it was with evident repugnance that they consented even to stay until Sister M. of the Assumption de Taillefer and some faithful postulants were installed in the house that M. de Langrie, the president, placed generously at their disposal in Neuve street.

This was the third time the Community moved. It took place towards the end of 1649, and the Religious remained there until 1657. The poverty, the narrowness of their quarters, were about the same; however, several incommodities had disappeared. But the number of the household had greatly diminished; the courageous and persevering novice remained alone at the head of the house. She was tempted many times to abandon the enterprise. One day the temptation was so strong that she took a ladder in order to scale the wall, so she would not be seen leaving the house. But an invisible hand threw her violently to the ground, just at the moment when she was about to jump over the wall. This fact, which she could never explain, strengthened her vocation.

The benefactors of the new work were not discouraged either. Monsieur and Madame de Langrie, although they took their daughter out of the house of Our Lady of Charity, did not cease to urge Monsignor Mole to accept the foundation, to which they were ever most bountiful. Another extraordinary thing gave renewed confidence, that was the high esteem and the great value they placed on whatever was said or done by Sister Marie Desvallees. Moved by an inspiration that could not be devined, she always announced its final triumph.

About this time, this Sister spoke to our Lord about the tribulations to which the Blessed Eudes was exposed. Our Lord replied to her:

"Tell him to rejoice, for he has given to my holy Mother and Myself, two beautiful palms to plant in the garden of the Church; in order that they take deep root, they must be planted with care; dig deep into the ground, so as to cover the roots with fresh earth and have them well manured. We Ourselves shall water them with care, so they will have sufficient moisture and so increase their ability to enlarge and produce fruit, and when they shall have taken root, we shall plant at their foot beautiful vines, that will produec the finest grapes. By these two palms," He added, "I mean his two establishments. Digging the ground very deep, signifies that the works of God are founded on humiliation, and self-abasement. Covering the roots with manure and good ground, is to suffer with patience, firmness and constancy all the hardships and persecutions of those who oppose the work. The vine is charity."

At the time the seminary chapel was closed, and the Charity was abandoned by the Visitandines, she became energetic in her assurances that the troubles and tribulations of the monastery were nearly over.

The Blessed, on his part, made every effort to second the designs of God. He wrote to his spiritual children, and after the manner of the saints, exhorted them to rejoice in the midst of their trials.

They had written to wish him a happy feast, which probably was the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist. This is the reply he sent them from Paris:

My very dear Sisters:

"Jesus, the Most Holy Heart of Mary, be the life and joy of our hearts forever!"

You have rejoiced me very much by your beautiful and loving letter, for which I thank you a thousand times. I trust that the Holy Communion you offered for my intention, on the feast of Saint John, will be both useful to me and to yourselves, since all my intentions are only for the sanctification of your souls, and the establishment of the reign of God in your hearts. It is for this you must work unceasingly; it is in that all your happiness consists, and it is in that you must place all your joy.

A propos of this joy, I wrote you that, on the 5th of July, we shall celebrate the Joys of the most holy Virgin, our Good Mother. If you have not thought of it, I pray our dear Mother, to mark another day on which you may keep it, and permit you all to go to Holy Communion, which you must offer for five intentions: the first, in thanksgiving to the most Holy Trinity for all the joys that were given to the Blessed Virgin on earth as well as in heaven; secondly, in satisfaction and reparation for the sufferings and sorrows, that we have caused her by our sins, while she was on earth; thirdly, for the augmentation and increase of the joys she possesses in heaven; fourthly, to ask God that He give us the grace to despise and hate the false joys of this world; fifthly, to ask also that He give us the grace to place all our joy in doing in all things and everywhere His most amiable will, and to bear the cross with our most adorable Savior. For truly, truly, my very dear Sisters, there is no truer subject of joy on this earth. Oh, that we had the sentiments of Saint John of the Cross! When interrogated by our Lord regarding what he desired for the services he had rendered Him he made this reply: "Lord, I ask only one thing, to suffer and be dispised for You." It certainly was the Holy Spirit that inspired him to ask for this greatest gift, to suffer and be despised for God!

After you have communicated for these intentions, I pray you, my very dear Sisters, to think seriously, each one in particular, what you can do to increase the accidental glory of the most precious Virgin. Besides, you must not omit to pray hard for Father Mannoury and myself. We are doing all in our power for your house, or rather for the house of our Lord and His blessed Mother. But the business we are engaged in requires patience and resignation. However, I trust that we shall soon see the end, and that it shall be what we so much desire, that our struggles may soon be over.

I have written this letter for the Mother and the daughters, whom I salute in particular and in general. I pray you also to write to our dear Brothers, to remind them to observe the feast of the *Joys* of the most holy Virgin, for I have no time to write to them.

I remain with deepest affection, my very dear Sisters,

Truly yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

Exhorting them to celebrate the feast of the Joys of the holy Virgin, in the midst of such trials, is like the folly of the cross, the primitive trait of the saints, so incomprehensible to the world and those imbued with its spirit. We perceive, also, in this place how the Blessed gradually introduced the devotion of the Sacred Heart. He was so united to them. Enclosed in the wording of this letter is a kind of prophecy, regarding the near approach of the end of their trials. He announced it, although seemingly an impossible event. *"I trust," he said, "that we shall soon see the end, and that it may be as we have wished."*

This letter was written after Bishop Mole put a check to all his efforts. Several times the Blessed Eudes cast himself at the feet of this prelate, begging him to complete what his predecessor had begun in connection with the Institute of Our Lady of Charity. He was always repulsed. M. and Mme. de Langrie, with admirable perseverance, offered to be the founders, and gave to this effect the sum of 10,000 livres, notwithstanding the fact that they had withdrawn their daughter from the monastery; but as this magistrate had not yet appeared in person before the Bishop of Bayeux he did not have a chance of proposing this himself, so the Bishop contented himself with saying that this sum, although quite considerable for the time being, would be insufficient. Towards the end of the year 1650, or in the month of January, 1651, Bishop Mole and M. de Langrie were in Paris at the same time. The Blessed Eudes asked the President to go himself and renew in person his offers of foundation to the prelate. He went, accompanied by M. de la Porte, counsellor of the Parliament, and Reverend P. Mannoury, who was always in some way or other mixed up in this foundation. The mere sight of this priest, companion as he was of the Blessed Eudes, so vexed the Bishop that the poor father had to leave the audience room. The entreaties of such distinguished personages were difficult to reject; the Bishop did not dare to refuse them. To cut short all negotiations he said that the foundation would need at least 14,000 livres, hoping, of course, that this sum would never be given.

It was in this instance that the Blessed institutor performed an act as heroic as it was disinterested. A young man, M. de la Boissiere, had quitted the world and the army to rank himself among his children, and he had given 4,000 livres for the Seminary of Caen, whose needs were very great. For during the preceding year the Congregation of Jesus and Mary had bought the house occupied by the seminary, and it was very far from being paid for. Besides, it was very evident that this state of things had been contrived by the Bishop. The Blessed put all these considerations aside, to make assurance of the existence of Our Lady of Charity doubly sure, and M. de la Bouissiere begged his superior to lend this sum to the Sisters.

Whoever takes time to acquaint himself with what is contained in the documents will readily perceive that the Blessed at that time, and even up to the time when the Bulls were received in 1666, was more worried and preoccupied about his Religious than about his own children.

M. de Langrie went again to the prelate to sign the contract of foundation. Then it gradually dawned upon him that his Lordship was only casting about for means to render the whole enterprise impossible, as he had done previously by raising the figures of the sum he declared necessary, so now he alleged a crowd of new pretexts to drag on the affair until all would grow tired of it. It was then that the Blessed Eudes lost hope in human aid, and turned for help to the Throne of Grace. To assure himself that his prayers would be heard he invited all persons of piety whom he knew of to assist him.

God heard their united prayers. On Tuesday, the eve of the feast of the Holy Heart of Mary, Bishop Mole put off their intended meeting for the discussion of this business until Friday, but on Wednesday, the day of the feast, without having warned any one of his intentions, he sent for M. and Mme. de Langrie. They mutually agreed to the clauses of the contract and signed it. The same day the Bishop gave his letters of institution:

Edward Mole, by the divine permission and that of the Apostolic See, Bishop of Bayeux, Royal Counsellor, Greeting:

The desire that we have of procuring the glory of God, the good of the neighbor and the salvation of souls, makes us hold in benediction every occasion the Divine Goodness sends us. Among others we have judged that the design of assisting women and girls who have fallen into libertinage is the effect of true charity.

Wherefore, after having read and duly considered the letters patent of the King, granted to this effect in the month of November, 1642; together with the request presented us by Lord John Le Roux, Chevalier, Lord of Langrie, Royal Counsellor, and President of the Parliament of Normandy, and of Lady Marie Le Roux, his wife, authorized to this end, for the erection and establishment of a Community of maidens who consecrate themselves to God by the solemn profession of the three vows of religion, under the Rule of Saint Augustine, and under the name and bearing the title of "Daughters of Our Lady of Charity," to assist, harbor and guide the girls and women who have fallen into the disorders of a licentious life.

Seeing, also, the contract of foundation and endowment for the profit of the said Community, made by the said Lord and Lady of Langrie, meaning the sum of 14,000 livres—besides money, they have given property and an annuity of rent—said contract being amply witnessed by Notaries Chatalet of Paris, the eighth day of February, 1651.

We, after having invoked the name of God, for His greater glory, and for the help and conversion of said poor girls and women, have admitted and do admit, approve and have approved the said petition of the Lord and Lady de Langrie, and the said contract of foundation and endowment made by them for the aforesaid agreement.

And for the execution of the instrument relating to the aforesaid petition and contract, have established and shall establish a Community of maidens, in the city of Caen, to form therein a religious corporation, under the name and title of "Daughters of Our Lady of Charity," under our jurisdiction, obedience, visit, and all other episcopal rights, for us and our successors in the episcopal dignity, and under the Rule of

Saint Augustine; we reserve to ourselves the right of prescribing such Constitutions and Rules for them, as well as for the direction and guidance of the Penitents, such as we reasonably judge proper for them.

We have permitted and shall permit the said ladies, who shall be over the Penitents for their direction and guidance, to make the vows of religion, after having spent two years of probation, and having attained their twentieth year, under the direction of our very dear Daughters of the Visitation of the Monastery in the city of Caen, or other Religious whom we may judge proper and capable, in order that they may be formed to the religious spirit, and to give their voice and suffrage regarding the profession of said maidens; they cannot, however, be received or admitted before they have been examined as to their vocation, capacities, age and other conditions required by us or our Vicar-General or other ecclesiastic deputed by us.

And desirous that an Institute so holy and so useful should be durable, so that the Religious would not readily renounce their vocation, which is at once charitable and Godlike, we ordain and enjoin them, under the good pleasure and approbation of our Holy Father the Pope, to make, besides the ordinary vows of religion, a fourth, which is to serve with the grace of God, in the conversion, instruction, reception and guidance of the girls and women who, having fallen into sin, will enter in the said monastery to change their lives and do penance for their sins. And in expectation that his Holiness approves the fourth vow, in quality of a solemn vow of religion, we ordain that the said maidens, who make their profession, oblige themselves by simple vow to the said functions, retreats and guidance, for which end the Community has been erected, approved and received by us.

We also declare that when there will be a professed Sister of said monastery who shall be judged by us, according to canon law, capable to be superior, there must be twelve professed, and if they have not that number exactly, all the other professed—in our presence or that of our Vicar-General, or other by us deputed—shall proceed to the election of a superior, we reserving to ourselves the right of confirming the election, if we judge it proper. Presently, she, with the other professed of said Community, who by the constitution can be admitted to elections and have a voice in chapters, shall elect other officers, and may receive novices, and give their voice and suffrages to admit to profession those whom they may judge capable, in the form and manner prescribed and conformable to the Rules and Constitutions we shall give them.

Afterwards, the said Religious of the Visitation of Caen or of other Orders, if they had been called there by us, shall return to their own monasteries, if it does not appear necessary to keep them for some time longer for the good, utility

> and advantage of the said Community; also, they cannot leave said monastery without our consent.
>
> Furthermore, we do declare that the said Religious shall be obliged to receive and guard well all and singular of the Constitutions that we prescribe for them, in the form and manner that will be laid down by us, and they must obey not only us and our Vicar-General, but also the superior whom they shall elect, in case that we find it proper to commit that office to some particular person, and their confessor shall be named by us or by our Vicar-General, specially approved for that charge.
>
> And in fine, that this establishment be permanent without any change or alteration in these presents, we ordain that a copy of this, together with all my letters, contracts, and other documents concerning the present establishment, shall be duly placed in our secretariat, to be had whenever it may be required.
>
> In testimony of which we have signed these presents with our own hand, and have put the seal of our arms, and countersigned by our ordinary secretary.
>
> Granted favorably at Paris, in our Hotel of the Treasury, in the year 1651, the eighth day of February.
>
> Signed: EDWARD MOLE, *Bishop of Bayeux.*

The prelate ratified the same day the contract of foundation in his Hotel of Paris. Mme. de Camilly received with Mme. de Langrie the qualities and rights of foundress, in recognition of the great service she had rendered it: that, in effect, the house owed her, in great part at least, having escaped the many tempests that were ready to destroy it. Christianity had the right to show itself in public and private life. Very often the Parliaments ungratefully abused the privileges of the Church, but they at least preserved the Christian spirit. This is proved in all its beauty in the commencement of the contract of Mons. de Langrie:

> Were present in person Messire John Le Roux, Chevalier, Lord of Langrie, Royal Counsellor, President of his Parliament of Normandy, and Lady Marie Le Roux, his wife, residing in the city of Rouen, being present in this city of Paris, to legally authorize these presents.
>
> Considering that there is greater joy in heaven over the conversion of one sinner than over ninety-nine just, and that our Lord is come on earth to call, not the just, but sinners to repentance, for whom He shed His blood, and sacrificed His life upon the cross; for which reason there is no work more agreeable to His divine Majesty than to co-operate with Him in the salvation of souls, especially those that have wandered; to this effect, desirous of contributing to the establishment in

the city of Caen, under the authority, good pleasure and dependence of the Illustrious and Most Reverend Edward Mole, Bishop of Bayeux, according to the letters patent granted by the King to this effect, in the month of November, 1642, of a House and Community of ladies, making profession of the Rule of Saint Augustine, under the name and title of "Daughters of Our Lady of Charity"; that the end and the Institute shall make particular profession of religion, to work for the salvation of souls, and employ themselves in the conversion and instruction of the girls and women that are wandering and have wandered outside the path that leads to salvation, and who shall, voluntarily, come to the said house for their conversion, and to do penance for their sins, and to learn to live a good life for the future—from the time those said ladies commenced this worthy employment great fruit has been noticeable, and gives much hope for the future, if the said house and Community be founded in perpetuity—for these and other causes, the said Lord and Lady de Langrie, through the devotion they have to our Lord Jesus Christ, Redeemer of sinners, and towards His holy Mother, advocate of penitent souls, and patroness of said Community, have of their own free will, for them and their heirs, given * * * *

Here follow the details of the means assuring to the Religious the sum of 14,000 livres; the conditions imposed by the founders, they reserving the right of receiving their daughter as a Religious in the Community, demanding some Masses for their souls after death, and burial in their Church. M. de Langrie, however, out of respect for Marie Desvallees. was buried in the Seminary of Coutances. The monuments we see yet in the Chapel of the Charity of Caen are those of M. de Langrie's son and his wife.

The Blessed John Eudes was then in Paris, and it would be difficult to express his great happiness. We find it, however, expressed in a letter to the Community dated the 11th of that same month.

My dear Daughters:

Jesus, the Most Holy Heart of Mary, be our life and our joy forever!

Behold I bring you tidings of great joy: place yourselves on your knees to receive it, not because I bring it to you, but because our most amiable Jesus and His most holy Mother give it to you.

At last, after several years of patient waiting, last Wednesday, the eighth day of February, feast of the Most Holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin, the letters of your establishment have been signed by the Bishop of Bayeux, and the contract of foundation has also been signed by M. and Mme. de

Langrie. Now, as you are the daughters of the Queen of Heaven, you will be obliged to love and honor in a very special manner her most amiable Heart, and in celebrating the feast with particular devotion; to have but one heart with her, and to print in your hearts a perfect image of the love, charity, obedience, humility, meekness, zeal for the salvation of souls and all the other virtues that reign in her Heart, in order that by this means you may become according to the Heart of her Son.

Fear nothing; your Community and your Institute are founded on the Immaculate Heart of the sovereign Empress of the universe. And it was accomplished, not through man, but by a particular order from Heaven. For last Tuesday the Bishop of Bayeux, after several delays and difficulties transferred the session regarding this matter to Friday, and on the same day he decided that it should be settled on Wednesday, and so it was done. Eternal thanks be ever rendered to the Most Holy Trinity, to our Lord Jesus Christ, and His precious Mother, and all the angels and saints who have helped on this great work. And may all those who have contributed in any manner in this matter receive abundant blessings from heaven.

In thanksgiving, I advise you, my very dear daughters, to do what follows:

To recite every day for a week, all together, the *Te Deum laudamus,* the *Ave Cor sanctissimum,* and every day one of the eight litanies of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin, which are to be found at the end of the prayer book, in honor of this same Heart, and after the prayer to the Holy Heart say the prayer to Saint Joseph, that of Saint Gabriel of the angel guardians, and that of the saints which is usually used for the feast of All-Saints.

Besides, you should make thirty-four Communions, at your convenience, in thanksgiving to the Most Holy Trinity, to Jesus, to the holy Heart of His glorious Mother, to the angels and saints, and for the Bishop of Bayeux, for your founders and benefactors, and for all those who have contributed in any way.

Moreover, it seems to me that you ought to write four letters of thanks: the first to the Bishop; the second to M. the President de Langrie; the third to Mme. the Presidente; the fourth to Mme. de la Porte, to whom you are under great obligations. I pray our dear Sister M. of Saint Francis to write these four letters.

I conjure you especially to begin to acquire a thorough knowledge of how you should live as true daughters of the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of God. It is in the sacred love of this Heart that I am and shall be eternally, my very dear Sisters, Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

P. S. Wait until Reverend P. Mannoury and M. de Langrie go to Caen, to sing a solemn *Te Deum;* but while you are waiting do not neglect to recite it as I have told you in my letter.

This happy news gave renewed life to the pious young ladies that composed the Community of Our Lady of Charity.

The guidance of Divine Providence was so manifest that they could not stop admiring and thanking the goodness of God. The time of trial was over, and they would be allowed to consummate their sacrifice, for which they had so long looked forward. It was then with the greatest joy that they fulfilled the behests of their good Father.

To accentuate their happiness, and to their unspeakable joy, several excellent subjects, who had hesitated for a long time on account of the uncertitude of the future of the convent, now hastened to show their determination to consecrate themselves to God and the salvation of souls. In a short time the novitiate was in a flourishing condition in the number and fervor of the new-comers.

These postulants received the habit and became holy Religious. The Community could at last be properly constituted. However, it was not yet safe from the bickerings of the civil power. It seems that the letters patent obtained in 1642 had not been registered in the Parliament of Rouen, and this delay, according to law, rendered them useless. It was necessary to solicit letters of renewal, in order to permit them to be registered. The Blessed was not able to procure them until December 10, 1657, and had them registered in the Parliament of Rouen on December 7th of the following year. His journal mentioned at that date that he succeeded only after repeated efforts and by a direct intervention of Divine Providence.

M. de Camilly had much to do in this matter, and charitably paid a part of the expense of the registering; for the agreement between the Sisters and the Seminary of Caen was made shortly before the death of theinstitutor, and it proved that nearly 2,000 livres were expended by him to pay all these costly formalities.

The recital of these long trials are something similar to trials endured for like causes in our own day; it is always difficult for them to become well established. Is it not really so?

CHAPTER VIII

RETURN OF MOTHER PATIN AND THE VISITANDINES —RECEPTION TO THE HABIT, AND THE FIRST PROFESSION —DESCRIPTION OF THIS CEREMONY —LETTER OF DIRECTION OF THE BLESSED JOHN EUDES

At the time when the letters of institution were given, after ten years of its existence, the Community was composed only of a few postulants, having at their head one novice, the courageous Marie of the Assumption de Taillefer. She had scarcely turned back from her meditated plan of escape when she saw the difficulties vanish. Without further delay she wrote to the Blessed Father to obtain the favor so long desired of making her religious profession; the letters of institution, exacted for that ceremony, the return of the Visitandines. He sent her the following reply:

My very dear Daughter:

Jesus, the Holy Heart of Mary be ours forever!

It is my desire that you make your profession very soon. If it were in my power it would be already over. But it is necessary that you should have Religious with you beforehand, and you shall have them very soon. Remain in peace until then, my dear daughter, and prepare yourself well for this great action. I pray our Lord and His most holy Mother to prepare you themselves, and may they make you according to their own Hearts. It is in the love of this holy Heart that I am for you and all my dear daughters.

My very dear daughter, ever yours,
John Eudes, *Missionary-Priest.*

P. S.—I have given Madame de la Porte the book of the *Heart,* with the sign manual and your letter, which she read, and testified her great satisfaction. She told me to thank you, and that she would soon write.
Paris, March 11, 1651.

This letter was written during the great mission of Saint Sulpice, that M. Olier had asked for so frequently. This mission was called the *marvel of the century.*

The book of the *Heart,* of which he spoke, was the book he composed to spread his dear devotion to the Holy Heart of Mary.

The date proves the length of the negotiations that were necessary to obtain the return of Reverend Mother Patin. She had been deposed from the superiority, and nothing really seemed to oppose her return, but Mother Dubreuil, then superior, and her Religious did not wish to be deprived of her counsels and services, and expose her anew to all the troubles that had been her portion in the Charity formerly. Mother Patin herself, with all her virtue, felt the greatest repugnance to take charge again of such a heavy burden. A divine intervention was needed, a sort of miracle to determine her. Here is the recital made to a superior of her Order some years later.

CAEN, March 22, 1658.

My very dear Mother:

Since it is for your consolation, and through obedience to your expressed wish, that I tell you very sincerely what happened to me regarding that little Community. As far as I can remember this is what occurred: A great part of the time that I was Superioress of the Visitation I felt very ill and I was extraordinarily sad; being deposed from office did not help to ease my condition. Our Mother tried every available remedy, but all in vain; I was nearly always melancholy, and its depth seemed to be fathomless; I could never express it. This good Mother, seeing me in such a pitiable state, said she did not know what to think. My prayers and meditations were all petitions to God and to the Holy Virgin that I would be delivered from my sufferings; the application of my mind was the same; every part of my being cried out the desire to be delivered from so heavy a cross. My interior pains were so great that I know not what sustained me; I had all sorts of temptations.

One evening, after Matins Mother entered our cell, and seeing my pitiable condition, all bathed in tears, she said all manner of things for my consolation, but in vain; I remained inconsolable. Having passed the night without having any sleep, as it seemed to me, about three or four o'clock in the morning, as I asked our Lord to deliver me from my torments, saying to Him that I could no longer exist if He did not help me, I saw at that moment our Blessed Father Saint Francis de Sales, accompanied by two of our Sisters of the Visitation, who were at his right side. He was habited in his ordinary garb, in a rochet and a violet capuch, and he said to me in sweet voice: "Yes, you shall have health of body and peace of mind if you desire it—not for yourself, but to render service to Our Lady of Charity." Presently the Blessed Father disappeared, and immediately my soul became as calm as a summer's sea; not a wave of sorrow remained to sweep away that placid feeling of rest and peace that took possession of me, and with peace health returned. I was able to go at once to meditation and all the other exercises without the slightest feeling of my former melancholy. Our Mother and several of our Sisters were lost in amazement, and they said to me: "My, but you do look happy!"

Several months passed thus. Meantime, this dear Mother made me understand from time to time that many persons desired my return to the Charity. "But I assure you," she said, "that you shall not go there." I kept in the innermost recesses of my heart what our Blessed Father had said to me; wouldn't give my cherished secret away at any cost, not even to our Mother, but left her at liberty to do as she pleased. Some months later I fell ill of a pain in my side, with an oppression of the chest and continuous fever; even after I had been bled several times and taken remedies of every description I was no better, and the doctors declared that there was no hope; that I was as good as gone. By what our Mother had said to others at that time, and often afterwards, we knew that she had made a vow that if our Lord would restore me to health she would plaec no hindrance whatever to my return to the Charity; still, she did not discover anything to me. I must acknowledge that I was very disinclined to return there; that the mere thought was utterly repugnant to me, although the Community had shown me much kindness; indeed, all the Sisters from the first to the last showed me the greatest cordiality. I believe, however, that self-renunciation was most necessary for me, seeing what passed, and what M. de Bernesq had said to me when he came to hear my confession in the infirmary while I was so ill. On being asked if he believed that God wanted me at the Charity in case I recovered, he answered: "Yes; I think you ought to go there!" He did not seem to have any other motive than that it was the will of God in my regard, for I know well he had a natural aversion to my going.

This is how Divine Providence settled the matter. Was it not just and proper that I should repair the faults I had committed? For when I was elected Superior of the Visitation, the best subjects of the Charity left with me. Our late Sister Anne Esperance, professed of our Monastery of Charolles, was one. Once when I had gone to the Charity, while I was Superior of the Visitation, to make some changes among our Sisters there, according to my devotion I went to salute the Blessed Virgin (a work of art), holding the Infant Jesus on her right arm, and in the other hand a bunch of flowers. As I cast my eyes on her countenance, she looked at me fixedly; there was anger in her glance, and holding out her right arm she said: "You did wrong to my house when you took away the best subjects." I was so thunderstruck with amazement

> that I could not remember anything else but that reproach. I prayed God to pardon me, and give me the grace of a happy death, for I could not believe that His goodness would allow me to live any longer in this miserable world.

After the Reverend M. Superior of the Visitation had made the vow for the cure of Mother Patin she recovered almost instantaneously, and with returned health of body tranquility of soul returned also.

These facts, well known to the Blessed, to his daughters and their benefactors, give in part the explanation of their perseverance. It proved also to the Sisters of the Charity that their work was certainly the Will of God, and miraculously sustained by Him. All the obstacles being raised Mother Patin returned to the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity on June 14, 1651, and governed it until her death seventeen years later. They gave her as companions the Mother Angelique Le Comte, Madeleine Angelique de Vimont, and a Lay-sister, Marie Augustine Dubois.

On the 18th of that month Reverend M. de Bernesq, Vicar-General, wished, himself, to perform the solemnity of consolidating the establishment. He sang the Mass, and exposed the Blessed Sacrament, and before an audience of the noblest people of the city he commented on these words of the angel to the most Holy Virgin: *"Dabit illi Dominus Deus sedem David patris ejus, et regnabit in domo Jacob in aeternum."* The Annals say:

> He spoke of the sublimity of the fourth vow; he observed that in the house of Jacob the beautiful Rachel represented innocence, and Lia the poor weeping penitent. This union was to be accomplished in this new house. It was what our Lord accomplished when He came on earth to redeem souls and reestablish them in grace. The city of Caen ought to be exceedingly grateful to the pious founder, M. de Langrie, who by his instrumentality had procured so useful a remedy against the corruption with which the city was infected. "You, my dear daughters, ought to humble yourselves, seeing yourselves elevated to such an employment, and one so sublime as that of working for the salvation of souls. The Blessed Virgin sanctified Saint John by the visit she made to his mother Saint Elizabeth. God has destined you to draw, as she did, sinful souls from the vice of impurity. You are about to create new Magdalenes. This woman, hardened in sin, once freed from its thraldom, clothed herself with a new garment, sanctifying grace, obtained through the in-

finite goodness of Jesus Christ, Whom she loved with so much ardor that she merited to be canonized by the mouth of our Lord Himself; she became His well-beloved, as Mary Immaculate had become His Mother, by her love and her humility. Work then, my dear Sisters, with generosity in cultivating those poor souls. They resemble the pearl enclosed in its envelope, therefore deprived of its brilliancy. Uncover this pearl, and you will find it is rare and priceless."

The little Community felt that their joy was at its height; its trials seemed at an end; it would have been complete but for the enforced absence of the holy founder. He thought it would be safer if he were to remain away, fearful of irritating the prelate who was undoubtedly prejudiced against him. Still, though absent, he was most solicitous for the Community. About that time he wrote to Mother Patin:

My very dear Mother:

Jesus, the Most Holy Heart of Mary, be ours forever!

It is always a pleasure for me to receive letters from you, but even when you do not write I harbor no doubt of your cordial charity in my regard. I sincerely thank you, as well as all our dear Sisters, for the active part you have taken in my afflictions, and I pray you to obtain for me from our Lord the grace to bear them in the proper spirit.

I confided your letter for the Bishop to M. le Tardif. He understands everything connected with the business, and will, I know, say the right thing at the right time and in the right place. He offered to take charge of the letter; so pray fervently that God may bless it, and that His adorable will may be accomplished in all things.

I am delighted to see that our dear Sisters are getting on so nicely and working so joyously and courageously in the way Heaven has marked out for them—that is, in the practice of solid virtues. I conjure them to continue to advance more and more, especially in humility, obedience and mutual charity, in the love of our most amiable Jesus and His most worthy Mother. It is in this same love that I salute all in general and each one in particular, and that I remain with all my heart,

Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

This consoling improvement determined Mother Patin to have the niece of the Blessed receive the holy habit. Mlle. Marie Herson, although very young, had remained the faithful companion of Sister M. of the Assumption. Mlle. Herson entered when about eleven years old. She was now twenty. The ceremony was to take place on the 8th of September. On account of the feast of that day she was named Marie of the

Nativity. For the same motive, as we have already mentioned, her uncle thought it more prudent to absent himself. He wrote to her on the 3rd of September the following beautiful letter:

My very dear Niece and Daughter in Jesus Christ:

With all my heart I bless our most amiable Savior for the good sentiments He gave you during your retreat, and I beseech Him to give you, also, the grace to make good use of them, and keep the resolutions you have made. I know it is a mortification for you that I was not present. I assure you it has been a bitter trial, also, for me, for I should have been overjoyed to be present at the ceremony of my dear niece's reception; but it will be for the best, and you will receive greater blessings, since it is very certain that the oftener the cross weighs us down, the more advantageous it will be for us. However, it did not hinder me from being present in spirit; my heart was pleading for you all the time, begging our Lord and His most holy Mother that they would deign, themselves, to strip you from affection to all sublunary things, and clothe you, with their own divine hands, with their spirit and transcendent virtues.

On your part you have to do eight things: The first is to have a great desire to renounce yourself completely, not only renounce yourself, but also all that is opposed to God's will, and to give yourself entirely to our Lord, in order that He can mold you as He pleases.

The second is to offer yourself to the Blessed Virgin, with a great desire to serve, honor and imitate her. She is your good Mother, and you must become like her, and be especially devout to her most amiable Heart.

The third, to consecrate yourself to the Son and the Mother, and employ yourself according to their most holy will, in the salvation of poor sinful souls, so precious in the sight of God.

The fourth is to protest to our Lord that you wish to do everything for Him, and especially what you will do on the feast of the Nativity of the most holy Virgin, not for any recompense from Heaven, nor to merit consolations of earth, but purely for His love, for His sole glory and for the accomplishment of His adorable will in you.

The fifth, often to recall that the action you have performed has been done long before you by holy Religious of both sexes, who have performed it with more holy sentiments than you have had, and unite yourself to their holy dispositions, and pray them to render you worthy to participate in their virtue.

The sixth is to pray to Saint Joseph, to Saint Gabriel, to to your good angel, to the holy angel guardians of the house, and all the saints who have had a special zeal for the salvation of souls, to assist you in this holy action.

The seventh, and principal one, is to humble yourself profoundly at sight of your unworthiness, misery and baseness, and constantly pray and beseech the holy Virgin that she obtain for you from her Son the grace to look upon yourself, as beneath the notice of all, and to be willing to be looked upon as the least and last in the house. This is what I recommend very particularly to you, my dear daughter. By fulfilling these conditions you shall become one of the daughters of the Mother of fair love.

The eighth is, after you have done all that you can to dispose yourself for so holy an action—that is to say, having applied all powers of body and soul to prepare yourself, that you offer and give yourself to Jesus and Mary, beseeching them to do still more for you, all that you are unable to do, and to prepare you themselves according to their own methods, and necessarily according to the will of the Most High.

Whatever our good Mother intends doing is, I know, for the best; hence, I only desire what she desires; for this reason I am very pleased that you should bear the name of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, so that you may look back on that day, as the day of your new birth in Christ, the beginning of a new life, a life with the Mother of sweet love, a life during which you shall model yourself according to her likeness.

Ask your good Mother to give whatever she judges convenient for each of our good Sisters, and whatever she does will be quite satisfactory to me.

I notified my nephew, your brother. It will be good if he can come over for the ceremony; but I cannot go, I must not quit my solitude; it would not be discreet. Do not forget to ask your brother how he comports himself; if he often goes to the Sacraments; if he keeps a steady confessor; if he says his morning and evening prayers; if he goes to catechism and sermons. Give him some good instructions: 1, on the fear of offending God; 2, of living in peace and charity with every one; 3, not to make use of profane language in buying or selling; 4, to put all his confidence in God; 5, to have devotion to the Holy Virgin and Saint Joseph.

I salute our dear Mother, and sincerely thank her for all the care she has taken of you, and I beseech our Lord and His holy Mother to thank her for us both. I also salute all my dear Sisters, and recommend myself to their prayers. I remain in the sacred love of the Most Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary, my very dear niece and daughter in our Lord,

Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

September 3, 1651.

This letter evidently contains the instructions that the holy institutor gave in similar circumstances. It breathes the spirit of great zeal for the salvation of souls, a deep humility and an intimate union with our Lord and the holy Virgin, and all the saints. In all his writings he emphasizes that his disciples be actuated by a supernatural motive, self-renunciation, a spirit of humility and undying gratitude to their Divine Model, judging themselves incapable of anything except their Divine Spouse Jesus Christ. His letters and the spirit that breathes through them are all impregnated with this motive.

Other ceremonies of the same kind took place at intervals, and very soon the Community had a goodly number of novices. The prophecy of Sister Marie Desvallees was realized. God gave to Our Lady of Charity the beautiful pieces of silver.

Although founded for nearly ten years this Community did not have one professed Religious, a fact, perhaps, not duplicated in the Church. At last Sister M. of the Assumption de Taillefer got permission to pronounce her vows, and the ceremony was arranged to take place June 2, 1652. This day ought to be a memorable one for the whole Order. The Blessed John Eudes would have had great consolation in witnessing this first profession; it seems that it would have been easy for him to have been present, since Bishop Mole had died the April preceding. But the hope of a more favorable episcopate, and the fear of irritating his adversaries, hindered him from assisting at it. Besides, the prohibition he had received, preventing him from performing any function, and forbidding him to open the door of his chapel, had not yet been raised.

The pious novice was extremely pained by his absence, for she had secretly hoped to have him present, but accustomed to submit herself to the Divine Will, she generously offered this new sacrifice.

The study of the ceremonial of profession necessitates the repetition of the the observation already made on the occasion of the Clothing. If the general order of this ceremony is similar to that of the Visitation, the questions, responses and prayers are different in the Charity.

As in taking the habit, the novice is brought processionally to the choir by the whole Community. When she kneels before the grate, the celebrant asks the object of her demand; he then assures himself that she is free to pronounce her vows, that she knows by the study of the Rules the grave obligations that she is about to contract. After her affirmative replies he invites her to accomplish her design.

If the people of the world would only give themselves the trouble to read these questions of the officiant and the replies of the novice they would not be so ready to look upon the Religious as insensible victims of a passing fervor or of the prejudices of an early education, and sometimes, as we hear them say, of the egotism of their families. The greater number of their own engagements which they themselves contracted, and the painful consequences in their after life, were not taken with as much due consideration and experience as the Religious before pronouncing her vows.

When the false friends of liberty cease to compassionate those pretended victims of the cloister, may they leave them the holy liberty of their engagements so voluntarily assumed, and they themselves renounce the monstrous oaths of their Masonic lodges! If they would imitate them, especiall before engaging themselves in the bonds of marriage, the divorce courts would have fewer clients, and the bad effects on families and society would be a thing of the past.

While the novice is preparing herself to pronounce her vows, the choir sings:

"*Vota mea Domino reddam in conspectu omnis populi ejus, in attriis domus Domini Dei nostri.*

"I will pay my vows to the Lord in the sight of all His people; in the courts of the house of the Lord our God."

The novice then reads the formula of her vows, written by her own hand, by which she promises to God poverty, chastity and obedience, and to engage herself in laboring for the conversion of the Penitents.

The sacrifice is complete; henceforth she belongs to God, and she signs this sacred contract at once. The first professed signed in this way:

I, Sister Mary of the Assumption Eustache have, by the grace of God, this day, the second of June in the year 1652, made my vows to live and die in the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity. May our Savior bless this day and render it profitable for eternity.

SR. MARIE OF THE ASSUMPTION EUSTACHE.

It is pretty much the same as is in use everywhere in the different monasteries. The name Eustache calls for an explanation, which may be necessary in a work of this kind, as the name may occur frequently. The Religious of Our Lady of Charity, in official acts, join their family name to their name in religion. But in the seventeenth century family names were not yet very well arranged. The same persons took different names, according to their circumstances; even the spelling of those names varied. One Religious of the Visitation signed her name seventeen different ways. Very often in the Charity the Sisters did not make use of their titles of nobility, no doubt through humility. The first professed gave them this example, for her name was Eustache de Taillefer.

Whilst the new Religious signed her holy engagements the choir sang, with the modification of the word *tribulationis* to that of *Professionis,* the first verses of the Psalm *Exaudiat te Dominus.* Several theologians teach that the religious profession is a second baptism. Is it not to recall this pious opinion that these words are made use of here?

Then the priest prays for the professed, and the prayer that he recites carries the soul to the celestial nuptials of the LAMB, and demands for His new spouse fidelity to His love. Then follows the blessing of the black veil and the silver heart. In the Charity the new professed changes her white veil for a black, which reminds her that she must never more see the vanities of that world that she has forever renounced. The image of Mary (silver heart) ought to remind her, day and night, that she is the daughter of her Immaculate Heart, and that she ought to reproduce in herself all her virtues.

The Mother Superior and the Sister Assistant arrange her veil, and place on her head a crown of roses. The new professed rises then and sings:

"*Haec requies mea in saeculum saeculi; hic habitabo quoniam elegi eam.*

"This is my rest forever and ever; here will I dwell for I have chosen it."

The choir then sings:

"*Beati mortui, qui in Domino moriuntur.*

"Blessed are those who die in the Lord, in the love of the Savior."

Now the professed prostrates beneath the pall, and the celebrant chants over her in the tone of the Lessons some of the lamentations of Job on the miseries and shortness of life, on the horrors of a death without hope; he then entones the *Libera,* which is continued by the choir.

In the eyes of worldings this ceremony appears cruel. Their wisdom consists in banishing the thought of death, and thereby be enabled to give themselves up to pleasures, without having any fear or uneasiness. The abuse they make of their liberty very soon exhausts the vital sources, and they see death approaching while their unrestrained passions have not yet been fully glutted. Then will they recognize with awful terror that death is about to snatch the poison-cup of human passion from their dying lips; then will they exclaim: *argo erravimus;* all the horrors of despair shall seize hold of them. The wisdom of the Christian is very different. He often thinks on death, in order to excite himself to fear. The good die in peace, without fear or terror; he bought it dearly, by the deprivation of his sense. Is it not more wise and more by the deprivation of his senses. Is it not more wise and more courageous to do so, and to have done so? What great things are being accomplished every day by those voluntary deaths!

The new professed rises on the invitation of the celebrant, and showing the principle of this new life, she sings these words:

"Dominus illuminatione mea et salus mea, quen timebo?

"The Lord is my life and my salvation; of whom shall I be afraid?"

The celebrant then asks our Lord that He would create and renew in her again the love of Himself, would make her a new creature by the grace of her vocation, that she persevere and merit to be received into the bosom of His mercy. As a means to this he gives her a crucifix. The professed adores and kisses it; then in a low soft voice she sings the following response:

"Absit mihi gloriari nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi, per quem mihi mundus crucifixus est, et ego mundo.

"God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world."

The choir takes it up:

"Vivo autem jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus.

"I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Thus is indicated the happy consequence of the union in the sacrifice with the Divine Crucified, the complete transformation into Him.

There only remains now to give thanks to Almighty God.

After having blessed the young Religious for the last time the celebrant entones the *Te Deum,* which is continued by the choir. Then the new professed is reconducted processionally to the novitiate, in which she follows the exercises three years longer, to finish her perfect religious formation.

A letter of direction written from Coutances by the Blessed to Mother Patin must have been dated about this time, or some months before this first profession. It is too remarkable not to be inserted here. This venerated superior feeling great aridities in prayer, and interior trials of no common order, the good Father consoled her, and ended his letter by questioning her about the dowry of Sr. de Taillefer.

My very dear Mother:

Whom I love very cordially in the love of the Most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary. May they be ever the Heart of our heart!

I am giving you from our Lord, and He has given to me the power of telling you that your spiritual trials are very agreeable to Him. Here is what comes to my mind. It is true, my dear Mother, that the miseries of the children of Adam are infinitely greater than we can know, or think or say. We bear about us two abysses of unfathomable depths of misery—the abyss of our nothingness and the abyss of our sinful nature. God permits you, or rather, He gives you the very particular grace of seeing in yourself some part at least of these two inexhaustible sources of misery, for two reasons: to strengthen by this means all the avenues of your heart against the dangerous vanity of this world, which causes strange ravages in a multitude of souls, making profession of virtue and piety, aspiring even after perfection, and which alas! precipitates many into the abyss of hell; in the second place, to conserve, fortify and increase in you humility, the most essential of the virtues. It is this that renders souls that possess it similar to the Heart of our Lord and of His holy Mother.

These trials render you yet more conformable to our most adorable Chief Who is our Lord Jesus Christ. He has applied to Himself these words of Jeremiah: *"Ego vir videns paupertatem meam."* "I am a man who has always in view my poverty and my misery." In effect, His humanity saw perfectly and clearly that of Himself He was nothing; that if He had not been preserved by the great miracle of the hypostatic union He would have been born in original sin, and therefore would have been capable of falling into all the miseries of the children of Adam. He penetrated even to the depths of these two abysses of nothingness and sin, and that view held Him in profound and inconceivable humility, and caused Him inexplicable pain.

Adore, then, my very dear Mother, the Divine Humanity in this state; thank Him for having willed to bear this for love of you; give yourself to Him, to accompany Him in the way which He may choose to take; offer Him all your little pains in thanksgiving for His, which were so great; beseech Him to allow you to make good use of them, and thus abandon yourself with your whole heart to the Divine Providence, in order that He may conduct you where He listeth.

On your part hold yourself always in a state of humiliation and submission to the guidance of God in your regard, but take good care never to be discouraged; you should rather rejoice and thank our Lord for the graces He has given you; for I tell you again, and I see clearly that it is a very special gift of God, that you are in that state that you describe. "Blessed," says Saint Paul, "is he who judges not himself according to his feelings, for it may often happen when one is feeling very well he is very ill; and on the contrary, one who thinks himself very ill may be, in fact, very well before God."

But let us abandon ourselves entirely to the judgment, the will and the guidance of Him Who knows us and loves us better than we can love ourselves. Let us remain in our nothingness; it is our house; and await in patience, humility, simplicity and submission *Him* Who has care of us, and Who needs our humiliation to do with it as He pleases. With my whole heart I give you over, my dear Mother, to His all-powerful goodness and beseech Him to annihilate you entirely, in order that He may possess you completely. Make the same prayer, if you please, for me.

I salute very affectionately all our dear Sisters, and encourage them not to fail to visit every day the most amiable Infant Jesus during these forty days that He remains in the stable of Bethlehem. They must adore, praise, love, and give themselves to Him, and supplicate Him to give them the spirit of His Divine Infancy, which is a spirit of innocence, humility, poverty, submission and charity.

They should also salute His most worthy Mother, thank her and give themselves to her to communicate to them the spirit of her dear Son, and finally to address themselves to Saint Joseph, that he may ask the same grace for them.

Reverend Father de Montaigu said that it will be necessary that the bond of M. de Taillefer be ratified by his sons-in-law. He has not neglected anything in order to succeed, but we must wait until M. de Taillefer comes here.

If you wish I shall tell him to go and see you, if he does not come soon. I am, with all my heart in Jesus and Mary, my very dear Mother,

Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

The insistence with which the Blessed Eudes recommended the devotion to the Holy Infancy is quite remarkable. During the time consecrated to that devotion he wished his children to assemble every evening before the Crib and make the acts of which he spoke in his letter.

CHAPTER IX

THE BLESSED JOHN EUDES CEASES TO BE SUPERIOR—HIS HEROIC VIRTUE IN THIS TRIAL—THE ORGANS ARE REMOVED FROM THE MONASTERY

THE joy caused the Blessed Eudes by the profession of Sister M. of the Assumption was not of long duration. All progress in his labors had to be marked by the seal of the cross. The cross that the holy institutor was called upon to shoulder shortly after this event was one of the heaviest yet borne by him, and it lasted all his life. Up to that time he had fulfilled the office of ecclesiastical superior to his daughters; Bishop Mole never deposed him from that office, even when he closed the seminary chapel. He exercised it even with extreme moderation during the vacancy of the episcopal see, after the death of that prelate. Bishop Servien gave him no permission to act.

This Bishop took possession of his see March 10, 1655. From the beginning of his episcopate he was prejudiced to a degree by a Father of the Oratory, whom his victim sometimes called Rabajoie by changing two letters of his name. He was on the point of closing the Seminary of Caen, and even wanted to withdraw from his influence the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity. The Religious received an order to proceed to an election for a spiritual Father. With bleeding hearts they took the liberty of addressing the following letter to the Bishop:

My Lord:

We justly fear that your Lordship is dissatisfied that we have not yet arrived at any conclusion in regard to the election of a spiritual Father. With all respect we take the liberty of acknowledging our irresolution; we are extremely puzzled in resolving this important question; we cannot make up our minds to choose any other than he whom we now most humbly supplicate your Lordship to give us, who is our Reverend P. Eudes. We realize, my Lord, that we are importunate in this case; but we rather suffer this confusion than the sorrow that weighs upon our hearts, a sorrow that we cannot relieve except by exposing to you our sentiments. Allow your benevolence, my Lord, to move you in this one point. Aside from the fact that the Reverend P. Eudes is our Father and institutor, and the knowledge we have of his merits, we have good reason to believe that there is no priest in the diocese that can surpass him in respect and esteem for your illustrious person, nor one more faithful, submissive and obedient in fulfilling the behests of your Lordship.

We cannot put forth the difficulties of his advanced age, and bodily weakness, knowing the fatigues that overwhelm him in his missionary labors, where he works as hard as the youngest and most robust. Now, my Lord, please grant us the favor we so earnestly solicit of giving him to us as our superior. We trust and hope that we will not be too much of a care to you, and we will not abuse your kindness if you will accede to our request.

Prostrate at the feet of your Lordship, we conjure you with all humility possible to listen to our petition, assuring you unanimously of our submission.

The Reverend Mother Patin wrote at the same time the following letter which, perhaps, shows less attachment to the Blessed institutor:

My Lord:

It is with all humility, submission and respect that I take the liberty of writing to your Lordship, that having made known to our Sisters the difficulties that oppose their united endeavor to obtain for superior our Reverend P. Eudes, they have besought me so earnestly to expose their sentiments on this point to your Lordship, I could not refuse them this consolation; as for myself, my Lord, I cannot be exempted from signalizing myself a child of obedience, and in this disposition, after humbly requesting the favor of having the Reverend P. Eudes for our superior, I supplicate you, in case you refuse me, to be so kind as to give us Reverend M. Verel, whom we have often had the pleasure of meeting. Our Community will abide by your decision, my Lord, while we humbly ask a continuation of your protection and benevolence.

Bishop Servien paid no heed whatever to these two letters, and designated for their superior, Reverend M. Le Grand, Cure of Saint Julien of Caen. When this prelate overcame his prejudices against the Blessed Eudes he did not judge it proper to give him back his office of superior of the monastery. Historians have remarked that this was permitted by Divine Providence, so that he could devote himself unreservedly to the missions. We do not think that his activity would have been more restrained by that charge, than it had been later on by the charge he received as superior of the Carmelites of Caen, and of the Ursulines of Lisieux. This separation rendered very difficult the compilation of the Rules and Constitutions.

Reverend P. Martine attributed those beautiful letters that have come down to us from the pen of the Blessed Eudes to this enforced separation from his dear Community. It was by correspondence that he treated all the questions that arose relative to the persons and affairs of the monastery. Two letters in particular make known his sentiments on this trial, and show his heroic patience and charity. It painfully impressed all the benefactors of the house, and particularly the temporal founder M. de Langrie and Reverend P. Mannoury. He in writing to the Blessed told him that M. de Langrie had completely ceased to do anything more for the convent. He received this characteristic reply:

> I regret very much that M. de Langrie is dissatisfied, but what can I do? If I yielded to my feelings I, too, would be tempted to give up the house, but we must forget ourselves and seek nothing but our Lord's interest and that of His holy Mother, and do all for their love. God permits everything for our good. He wishes to guarantee us against vanity and self-conceit which, perhaps, would be the fruit of our work, if He acted otherwise.
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> They only spoke on the subject to M. de Saint Julien; everything was settled before I heard it. I do not know if he did that on his own initiative, or if he and the Mother settled it together, but of this I am certain, that it did not come from my daughters. It is quite certain that for a long time past the good Mother did not wish to broach the subject, but we must have patience, and abandon ourselves to Divine Providence, muster all our strength to walk along the royal road of the cross, and do all we can to serve the house as far as we can for the love of our Lord and His most holy Mother. I spoke to the Mother, and have also written her since I came here, that it is necessary to send a man expressly to Rome, but she has not replied.
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> It is quite evident that the way M. de Saint Julien is taking is not for the betterment of conditions; he will not succeed. I wrote everything to M. de Langrie, and asked him not to lose heart, keep up his courage and especially his good will. I hope to be able to make a little trip to Caen in the near future; then I will see M. de Saint Julien and give him my reasons, and shall ask him to resolve upon what will be best to be done.

This letter is dated July 29, 1656, and was written from Coutances. It commenced by the invocation so frequently used at that time by the Blessed: "Jesus the Holy Heart of Mary be ours forever!" The proceedings that the Blessed institutor wished to renew at Rome appears to have been the motive that urged Reverend Mother Patin to ask for a change of superior.

Differences of opinion between persons, even the most holy, are quite frequent, and should not surprise us when they do occur. It often begets complete separation between the parties, as we see between Saint Paul and Saint Barnabas. Here we find this peculiarity very edifying, as the greatest cordiality never ceeased to exist between the Blessed Eudes and Reverend Mother Patin. She continued to communicate to him all her interior trials, and he to direct and console her.

Without doubt, Sister M. of the Assumption told him all her troubles, and made him the recipient of the fears she entertained of being separated from him. Het replied to her nearly at the same date:

My very dear Daughter:

Jesus, the Holy Heart of Mary be ours forever!

It is in the sacred love of this Immaculate Heart, furnace of immortal love, that I love invariably and equally all our dear Sisters, the well-beloved daughters and my very honored Mother. What shall separate my heart from the holy dilection that I owe to this dear house of so good a Mother? Shall it be tribulation or anguish, persecution or the sword, or any other thing? No, no; I am certain, with the grace of God, that not the angels, nor the principalities, nor the virtues, nor death, nor life, nor any created thing shall separate me from the service of this blessed house of my blessed Mother. And no matter what may happen, neither heaven, earth or hell can hinder me from doing in all the holy Will of my God; it is the only thing that I desire, and that I pretend to seek.

It shall be with a ready will that I shall do whatever our good Mother, and you, our very dear Sisters, desire of me, but I am so badly hampered in this matter that I cannot travel much without becoming ill, as Reverend P. Manchon saw when he came here. I need to take medicine, but must wait until the dog days are over. I believe I will be in Caen about September, but I assure you I will come sooner if I can, God willing.

Meantime, I shall recommend you with all possible devotion to the Lord of Hosts; this I do every day for all in general and each one in particular. Offer my best regards to your good Mother and all our dear Sisters. I remain in union with the love of this most amiable Heart, my very dear daughter.

Ever yours,
JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

I humbly salute our very dear Mother and all her good daughters, and I pray them to give you a good penance for having followed the methods of the world in your writing; this the true daughters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary ought to abhor as a pest—in this as well as in everything else, because the ways of the world are very displeasing to her, as well as to her Son.

This post-script shows with what care the Blessed seized hold of every occasion of forming his spiritual daughters in the spirit of simplicity.

His actions toward the benefactors of the Institute were not less efficacious. M. de Langrie continued his benefactions. When he came to the parlor to visit Reverend Mother Patin, he suspected, by the saddened expression of her face that she was in pecuniary embarrassment; he raised her courage, asking to pay a visit to the poor-box in the chapel.

"Perhaps," he ventured, "Divine Providence is going to send you some unlooked-for succor." Madam de Budos, Abbess of the Abbey of the Trinity, and Mme. de Camilly, never ceased to bestow many deeds of charity on this poor monastery, and we might state several others coöperated with them in the bestowal of their benefits.

Among the many gifts of M. de Langrie was an organ. Here is what is related in the Annals of the monastery:

Our illustrious founder gave us a book of plain chant and music, so that we could celebrate the feasts with more solemnity. Some of our Sisters, having very fine voices, were already accustomed to sing to the accompaniment of this instrument, and did so with such fine effect, the harmony being magnificent, that it excited people to come and listen to the singing. Meantime, the Reverend P. Eudes came on feast days, and remarked that the people were more interested in the music and singing than in their prayers, and he took the resolution to forbid it. Besides, he feared that we would lose that simplicity he had labored to instil into our Community, and be to us an occasion of vanity. He then marked in our Constitutions that we should not make use of organs, nor sing music in our choir. The organ, then, was banned without any dissatisfaction on the part of M. de Langrie, on account of the respect and deference he had for so holy a man.

Like all the historians who have preceded us, we must relate this fact. In these latter times several monasteries believed it would be useful to adopt the harmonium as an instrument well adapted to accompany the voices in their church ceremonies, but truth obliges us to state that there was a difference of sentiment regarding it. The opposing parties were guided by love for their rule and their traditions; indeed, there was nothing so edifying as the respect they testified for the smallest observances.

The other party was anxious to get this dispensation from superiors, and the reasons they brought to bear upon the matter had an importance all its own. The fatigue of their employments was very wearing, and it had been generally conceded by prominent authorities that the generations were growing weaker; consequently, the health of the Sisters was not as robust as formerly. Several monasteries even found it impossible to sing the Office as the Rule prescribed.

The Blessed John Eudes was greatly distinguished by the virtue of religion. As reformer of the clergy, this virtue was most essential for him. For his principal object he had the Divine worship, of which singing formed a part; the holy founder after endeavoring to inspire it in his sons, tried to form his daughters to the spirit of Saint Francis de Sales and to that of Saint Theresa, leaving them the ordinary church singing. He exacted of them in the execution thereof gravity, dignity and especially simplicity. The harmonium, as an instrument for accompanying the voices, is a part of that modern progress which he could not foresee, and which highly favored the chanting of the Office, besides diminishing the consequent fatigue. On the contrary, the organs, in the liturgical sense, are destined to alternate with the choir; the Church also forbids the use of them during the season of penance.

To judge accurately the spirit that actuated the Blessed Eudes in this regard we shall cite the following passage from a manuscript taken from Caen. It shows his last will concerning the litanies, and perhaps, also, the present question:

> Our good Father had a great attraction for the singing of the litanies of the most holy Virgin, wishing them to be sung with beauty and devotion. One feast day he came to our church and noticed that, while we sang Compline very well, we only said the litany rather in psalmody than in

chant. He reproached us very severely, and to excuse ourselves we told him that if we were to sing the litany slowly there would be no free time between mediation and supper. Without the slightest hesitancy he replied: "Well, then, would it not be better to say Compline in psalmody and sing the litany of our Blessed Mother with all the devotion and majesty possible?" From that time we have followed exactly the wish of this worthy institutor.

Another time we showed him some of those litanies with notes, which some of our Sisters found too intricate. He was on the point of forbidding their use, but after a moment's reflection he handed back the book to our good Mother M. of the Infant Jesus de Bois-David with this remark: "We must tolerate something in favor of the Mother of God."

It was probably on account of this kind interpretation of the Blessed Father himself that in the revision of the Constitutions in 1734 they only forbade singing music in parts.

Besides, at the time of which we speak, there was a reaction against the abuse of church music, and several Communities received from their founders the same prohibition as Our Lady of Charity. By observing *a great simplicity* in their singing they did not believe they would destroy the primitive spirit by the adoption of the harmonium. They did the same among the Trappist Fathers and the Eudists, and they had absolutely the same rule. The harmonium is no longer considered a luxury.

Moreover, Rome had been consulted on this matter, and replied that it was a matter of discussion for the diocesan authority, and it was that decision alone that was to stand in every particular case.

The holy Council of Trent, in Chapter X of Session XXIV, gives in effect the most extended powers to canonical visitors. Their interpretation of the Constitutions, as well as what they may order, constitutes law, and their dispensations are legitimate. At least, this continued up to the period of the Reformation.

Some years after the Blessed Eudes had ceased to be Superior of the Monastery, as we have already remarked, he lost his almoner, M. des Pommerais. The Annalist of the Order relates some details regarding these two changes, and we learn that after the departure of Mlle. Morin and the priest who had shared her sentiments it was the children of their holy founder that charitably fulfilled all the functions in behalf of the Sisters. Reverend P. Mannoury had fulfilled this charge devotedly until 1649. At that time M. des Pommerais zealously offered to fulfil the office of almoner, and acquitted himself of this employment with his usual piety until his death in 1659.

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CHAPTER X

SEVERAL REMARKABLE VOCATIONS—MADAM DE BOIS-DAVID—THE BOARDERS—DEATH OF MARIE DESVALLEES

1655-1660

THE Blessed founder busied himself, especially, in procuring some good subjects for the house, and those years so full of trials for him were years that furnished excellent vocations.

He first met Mlle. Le Comte at Coutances. She was bent only on seeking the pleasures of sense, mingling in all that was fashionable, never giving a thought to the religious life. She had some conversations with the Blessed Eudes, and also with the pious Marie Desvallees. Touched by the sublimity of their lives, evidenced in their conversation and other actions, she wished to follow their example and climb the mountains of perfection. Therefore she, in company with Mlle. le Lieupaul, her lady companion, presented herself at the Charity, was received, and together with her companion entered the novitiate. Although her dowry of 8,000 livres would have obtained for her many distinguishing privileges as a benefactress she would not consent to take advantage of it. On her reception to the habit she received the name of Mary of the Presentation, and Mlle. le Lieupaul that of Mary of the Conception.

But foremost among the new subjects that sought entrance into the new Order none gave it more honor than Madam de Bois-David de Soulbieu. Her vocation offers many traits of resemblance with that of Saint Jane Frances Chantal. Madam de Bois-David was born in Montmartin, near Carantan, in the diocese of Coutances, of a very distinguished family. She felt from her tenderest years a particular attraction for piety. She possessed a great soul, a solid mind, a heart tender and benevolent, and a temper mild and affable towards all who had anything to do with her. Keenly sensitive to the miseries of others, she felt extreme joy in relieving them. If it had been at all possible she would have followed her attraction, and consecrated herself entirely to the service of God.

But in obedience to her parents she married while very young. Her parents made a choice of M. Simon de Bois-David for their lovely daughter. He was a Captàin of the Guards, by whom she had six children. One of them became a Colonel of the Regiment of Piedmont and Governor of Chatalet in Picardy.

During the first years of her marriage, the maxims and vanities of the world imposed many obligations on her. This time of her life caused her much anxiety and disquietude. In reality she was only conforming to the exigencies of her social position. Her conduct, even then, was eminently Christian.

Her husband, full of esteem for her, left her perfectly free to perform any exercises of penance for which she felt any attraction. She often disciplined herself to blood, wore an iron cincture studded with nails, around her waist and performed many other heroic acts of mortification. During the long intervals and protracted absence of her husband, M. de Bois-David, she utilized her time in caring for the sick, and in order to vanquish her natural delicacy, she washed their sores, even the most infected, as well as the most revolting ulcers. One day (this recital freezes one with horror) she stripped herself of her chemise, in order to put it on a poor creature whose body was full of pus, and she had the courage to take that belonging to the poor woman and put it on herself, notwithstanding the extreme repugnance she felt in doing so, and even wore it for three days. Madame de Bois-David, living in the world, already belonged to the spiritual family of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary and of Saint Chantal.

The Blessed John Eudes was very intimate with her husband's family, particularly with M. de Memont, her brother-in-law; Madame de Bois-David, therefore, had many occasions of meeting him and becoming acquainted with him. As soon as she heard him speak of the things of God her heart was touched, and she conceived a great esteem for his sanctity. On his part he remarked in this lady excellent dispositions for virtue, and he did not doubt that if he could gain her to God she would, under his direction, make immense progress in perfection.

One day the man of God was dining with M. de Memont; he met Madame de Bois-David there, also. As she wore, according to the prevailing fashion of the day, a low-necked gown the Blessed Eudes remarked in the midst of the conversation that this nude way of dressing was the most pernicious fashion ever invented, that it dragged numberless souls into the abyss of hell. The young lady was so struck at his remark that she ventured to say: "But, Father, is it really true that one can be damned for that?" "Without a doubt, Madame," he replied in a very firm tone; and without any more ado he turned the conversation into another channel. A moment after Madame de Bois-David arose from table, went up to her chamber and reclothed herself more modestly, very resolved to observe this rule in the future, and notwithstanding the railleries of her world she always remained faithful.

This correction brought many other reflections to this great soul, mainly on the vanities of the world, of which she was the willing slave up to the present. It seemed to her that she had worked only to lose her own soul, and for the loss of many others, by her luxurious life and pernicious mode of dressing, a fashion all too prevalent. "Alas! what misfortune," she cried out, "to destroy souls that have cost our dear Savior so much!" It was thus God began to break insensibly the bonds that bound her to the world, and prepared her gradually to mount the rugged road that reached to Calvary. But Madame de Bois-David did not rest with simple reflections and beautiful sentiments; faithful in corresponding to these first graces she merited greater still.

For a long time she had been desirous of finding a good director who would help her in putting the affairs of her conscience in order, and she besought God in earnest prayer to send some one to her.

The meeting with the Blessed Eudes made her think that her prayer was heard. Without saying anything to him she decided some time later to go to Caen and confer more freely with him about the needs of her soul. She opened to him all the recesses of her heart, and told him all her trials and disquietudes. The relief she felt was so great that she hardly recognized herself; her heart tasted the beauty of a peace that was hitherto unknown to her.

From that time on she made several journeys to Caen to consult her wise director, and always found in his advice strength and consolation. She also assisted at some of his missions, and her desire to be united entirely with God made her petition Him to break, Himself, in whatever manner He chose, the bonds that attached her to the world, in order to be absolute Master of her heart.

Her prayer was heard and answered in a very short time, and even beyond her desires, for she needed all her resignation to support the misfortunes that He sent her.

Her husband was killed in the battle of Lens, and shortly after, one by one, her children were snatched away from her protecting arms, she accepted these consecutive deaths with heroic constancy and firmness. She said: "My sins, and those I have been the cause of, merit harder penance still. It is only right that I should endeavor to atone for the great offences I have committed against my God in sacrificing all that I hold dearest in this world." But what aided her most and consoled her for her great loss was the liberty she had gained, and she now saw that she could serve God without giving a portion of her heart to the world or worldly pursuits.

During the first years of her widowhood she procured a mission in her parish of Montmartin-en-Graignes, near Carantan; she wished very much that her pious director would preach it himself, but urgent affairs did not permit this. It was Reverend P. Manchon who had the direction of it, and it produced great fruits. Madame de Bois-David lodged the missionaries in her house for six weeks, and defrayed all expenses, happy to be able to render service to our Lord in the person of His ministers.

After this mission she gave herself up entirely to the practice of good works. She employed her days in meditation, pious lectures, and frequent examination of herself, and often approached the Sacraments; her recollection in the Church inspired devotion in those who saw her. Her charity for the neighbor was unlimited: criticisms and railleries were insupportable to her. She did all in her power to reconcile those that were at variance. She was seen to place herself on her knees before simple peasants, begging them to pardon those that offended them, and drop all feelings of rancor. Her love for the poor increased daily; she assisted them to the utmost of her power in troubles of mind and body; she visited them and consoled them in their sickness, instructed them in all that was necessary to salvation, taught them how to pray, and to make good confessions; she often stopped in their houses during their illness; made their beds, cleaned them, made their soup, served them with the tenderness of a mother. The length of any sickness did not wear out her patience; she often spent five or six weeks taking care of them; in fact, until they were cured. Such was Madame de Bois-David when she determined to enter the Institute of Our Lady of Charity.

But her vocation was prepared by marvelous ways; so wonderful, indeed, that it is impossible to doubt it was a supernatural call. Since the death of her husband she felt a great desire to quit the world, enclose herself in some monastery and pass the rest of her life in practices of sincere penitence; she did not think of any other thing than to save her immortal soul. The only thing that puzzled her was what particular Order she ought to enter. At first she thought the Carmelite Order was the proper one, hoping to find in that severe life the means of expiating her life of worldliness; but she believed it her duty not to do anything rash or without taking counsel.

Hence, she resolved to make a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Deliverance, to implore the holy Virgin to obtain for her the grace of which she had so much need in regard to this matter; she went from the Deliverance to Caen to conclude this important affair with her director. While she was making her thanksgiving she seemed to hear interiorly a voice saying to her very distinctly: "Turn to the side of Our Lady of Charity and you will find the Holy Infant Jesus. It is there that God wants you." These words appeared to her to come straight from Heaven, and she did not doubt that it was an indication of the vocation to which God was calling her. She went to Caen, and made known to the Blessed Eudes what had occurred, and to ask him to give her a formal and decided answer as to what place she was destined to work out her eternal salvation, firmly resolved to do whatever he counselled her to do. The wise director was too enlightened not to recognize that the inspiration was truly divine. He gave her the assurance, and neither of them thought of anything else except to put the design into execution, and keep everything a great secret.

Notwithstanding these wise precautions the relatives of Madame de Bois-David soon got wind of it, and raised a thousand objections, wishing at all hazards to have her renounce her design. All this only served to strengthen her vocation, and she made known to them her generous resolution of belonging henceforth to God alone.

This social upheaval and family resistance only served to hasten the execution of her project, and without heeding the clamors of flesh and blood, but only the voice of her director and that of her own conscience, he assured her that the longer she deferred her entrance the more difficulties would arise. She then made all her arrangements, and fixed the date of her entrance in the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity. The Blessed Eudes conducted her, himself, to the door of the monastery, accompanied by Reverend P. Manchon, M. de Bernieres, and M. and Madame de Memont, from whom she had at length wrung consent. There were also M. de Camilly and several other persons of piety.

Madame de Bois-David entered the Community with a generosity that astonished all her friends. The Religious, novices and postulants received her at the cloister door with great ceremony and conducted her to the choir where they sang the *Te Deum* in gratitude for the favor that God had granted the Institute in giving it such a subject. This joy is nothing to be surprised at. The prestige of nobility was very great at that time, and the level of equality had not yet submerged society. The brilliancy surrounding the monastery by the entrance of such an illustrious postulant was indeed a great benefit. She who had procured this remained quite peaceful in sentiments of that deep humility with which she clothed herself. She wept and groaned in the interior of her soul, confounding herself before God at the sight of the honors and all those marks of distinction; she reputed herself as among the most unworthy. Her first thought on arriving in her new abode was to pour out at the foot of the Holy Tabernacle all her feelings, telling our Lord how unreservedly she abandoned herself to Him, offering to Him the sacrifice of her own will, and placing herself in His hands with the resolution never to take back her offering.

From that time the fervent postulant paid no attention to her own wants, nor to anything that touched her personally. At that time the Sisters were living in M. de Langrie's house; the inconveniences were innumerable, but neither the extreme poverty of that Community nor the narrow lodgings were in any way capable of terrifying this virtuous lady; no sacrifice appeared too difficult to her, privations and sufferings produced no impression on her heart.

People of the world judge of these things only according to their own preconceived ideas, and cannot be persuaded that a person of her condition, accustomed to live in abundance, could not be long without repenting the step she had taken. Her parents were still making every effort to make her decide to leave the Community; to this effect they employed all the means their ingenuity could devise. There were even persons of piety who tried to make her scrupulous for having left the poor, to whom she had rendered so much service. They even told her that hers was an indiscreet zeal; that she was burying her talents, and hiding her light under a bushel, by throwing herself away on an obscure Community where she would never have an occasion of doing anything of importance, whilst she abandoned a harvest so replete with good works of all descriptions, and all the merits that she could have reaped there, while accomplishing God's will in the world.

These specious reasons changed her not; she held firm against every one, and thought only of the sacrifice she had offered to God and of the best means of accomplishing it. She helped materially in purchasing the house, which was situated on Quais street, and in making the necessary repairs so that it would be more appropriate to the needs of a monastery. She went there with the other Religious on Sunday, March 25, 1657.

After one year's trial she was admitted to the holy habit of the Institute; the ceremony of Clothing took place on April 29, 1658. On that day there was a great concourse of people, especially of the nobility, in the chapel of the monastery. Madame de Bois-David received the name of Sister Mary of the Infant Jesus, which had been so clearly predicted in the Chapel of Our Lady of Deliverance.

This name was not for her a name void of sense, but was the expression even of the rare qualities that were to ornament her soul. She received at the same time the spirit of the Holy Infancy, and she took special care to cultivate and increase that spirit incessantly, by her exactitude in fulfilling all the exercises of the religious life. Her conduct during the time of her novitiate was but one continual imitation of that of our Divine Savior. She had a horror of the world and its maxims; the love of the cross and of poverty formed her chief delight. The remembrance of her life in the world with all its vanity was a continual stimulant to mortification and penance; she always feared she did not do enough to expiate her sins and satisfy the justice of God. Plunged and, as it were, abyssed in the meditation of these holy considerations, how many tears of compunction did she not shed before her crucifix! How many times did she not thank the Lord for the grace of her vocation!

This is what gave her so much facility in the practices of religion, and that smoothed all her difficulties. She found a sweet joy in employing herself in the lowliest and most painful duties of the Community; that life of labor and fatigue was very dear to her—and she gave herself up to it with all the ardor of which she was capable. Subject to many infirmities during her novitiate she continued, nevertheless, to perform all her duties, seemingly as content in sickness as in health, and always disposed to receive from the Hand of God life or death with the most entire and most perfect submission to His adorable Will. Her holy director sustained her by his advice and letters. While she was a postulant he wrote to her:

My very dear Daughter:

Jesus, the Most Holy Heart of Mary be ours forever!

I sincerely thank you for the tokens you have given me of your frank and cordial charity. I assure you, my dear daughter, that I have done a great deal for the benefit of your soul, and that I have a most earnest desire to serve you according to the best of my ability, as God shall make known to me. All that is being done in your regard is for the best, have no doubt on that point, for you have a Spouse and a Mother who have all power in heaven and on earth, who love you more than you can love yourself, and whose wisdom guides and conducts all things to their final end in the best manner possible.

Then take care, my dear daughter, that you do not allow yourself to be disquieted, but place all your confidence in God. Annihilate yourself at the feet of Jesus and Mary; place before them all your thoughts, designs, desires, inclinations and will, and resign yourself unreservedly to their most holy will, and beseech them to conduct you to their feet, in the manner most agreeable to them, knowing that they will always do what is most useful and advantageous, and you should desire nothing more.

I affectionately salute our dear Mother, and all her daughters, my very dear Sisters. I remain in the sacred love of the most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, my very dear daughter, Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

This letter, in its brevity and simplicity, embraces nearly all the spiritual doctrine of the able director—annihilation of our whole being and full submission to the Divine Will, so as to permit Jesus and Mary full freedom of action in our regard. The reader will not fail to observe how he always introduces the devotion of the Sacred Hearts at the beginning and end of his letters. It proves well the vivacity as well as the seniority of his devotion, for we are only dealing now with the year 1657 or 1658.

Madame de Bois-David had one daughter, quite young, who entered with her into the convent in quality of boarder. This child had all the good qualities that could be desired in one so young, and especially in one of her condition in life. Cherished by every one she was particularly dear to her mother, who never ceased to bestow endearing marks of affection upon her. However, this generous mother exercised towards this dear little one a species of mortification that cost her untold suffering: she spoke but very rarely; only in the hours of recreation did she permit herself to have any conversation with her daughter; otherwise, she did not speak to her without permission. All her conversations with her tended to form her to piety, and to detach her from the world and soar aloft to God.

Thus passed the novitiate of Sister M. of the Infant Jesus. She was admitted without any difficulty to her profession when the time marked by the Rule had expired. Her conduct was so regular, her piety beyond contradiction, she appeared to be the model of a good Religious. The ceremony took place on May 1, 1659. This was for her a motive of redoubling her fervor in the fulfilment of all her duties, and of corresponding more faithfully to the abundant graces with which God had favored her.

She had hardly pronounced her vows when she declared a new war on her passions, and on all her natural inclinations, performing mortifications of all kinds. Such was her love for penance that she appeared insensible to the pains and sufferings that overtook her. Whenever she went to the parlor she spoke only on pious subjects, and stayed there only as long as necessity and decorum demanded.

The ardent zeal with which she was animated for the salvation of souls eminently fitted her for the charge of the Penitents, which they saw fit to confide to her; she had a wonderful talent for this employment, which is the most important duty in the Institute. Her words were full of unction, and went straight to the heart; she performed all her actions with a recollection so edifying that every one that had anything to do with her was moved to piety, which made Mother Patin, her worthy superior, say of her that it was impossible to express all the good that she recognized in this great servant of God, and this good Mother was very enlightened in ways of sanctity.

But it was a fruit ripe for Heaven; her great mortifications soon exhausted her strength. Attacked with serious infirmities she never complained, and had it been in her power no one would have known anything about it. The most skilful doctors were powerless to relieve her; it was soon an admitted fact that she would never recover. She willingly accepted whatever God was pleased to send her. Her desire of satisfying the Divine Justice for her sins rendered her insensible to her sufferings; she even asked of God to send her still more, and her prayer was largely answered. As she had striven to imitate our Lord in everything, she wished also to be rendered similar to Him in death. She died on a hard cross in a species of abandonment and desolation that it was almost impossible to console. It was thus that God himself prepared His victim, and made her pay the last farthing due to His Divine Majesty; in other words, to His Divine Justice.

During this long passion she was radiant with peace, faith and a beautiful serenity of soul; her contenance beamed with an angelic sweetness; outwardly and inwardly submissive to all orders received, casting her patient eyes from time to time upon the crucifix where she found strength and patience to support her terrible sufferings.

As her malady increased she feared that death would surprise her; she then requested that the Sacraments—the last rites of Holy Church—would be administered to her. She received them in the most edifying dispositions; those who witnessed that sorrowful ceremony could not restrain their tears. Shortly after she called for her daughter and gave her her last instructions concerning her eternal salvation. She spoke little on account of her extreme weakness, but the few words she addressed her were pronounced with so much unction that the dear child was bathed in tears, and she kept her mother's last advice engraven on her heart during the remainder of her life. It inspired in her an ardent desire of walking in the footsteps of that venerated mother. At the last the dear child went upon her knees to receive her mother's parting blessing. From that moment Sister M. of the Infant Jesus occupied herself only with God. Several times she pronounced the sacred names of Jesus and Mary, then breathed her soul into the hands of her Creator, in the greatest peace, on January 3, 1660, being nearly forty-one years old.

Such was the holy and edifying life of Sister M. of the Infant Jesus de Bois-David de Soulebieu since her profession; such also was her precious death, worthy recompense of her fidelity to the grace of her vocation, and the eminent virtues she practiced in the religious life, during the short time she lived in that holy state.

The Blessed John Eudes was in Rouen when this death occurred. He wrote to Mother Patin a letter full of consolation, such as only a saint could have written.

JESUS, MARY, JOSEPH.

My very dear good Mother:

The Divine Will be our guide in all things!

The decease of our very dear and regretted Sister M. of the Infant Jesus was quite a surprise to all at first; but having case our eyes on that most adorable Will which disposes all things for the best my heart is at peace, and my tongue can falter forth: "Father, not my will, but Thine be done!" Oh, that is the best, my dear Mother, since such is the good pleasure of the Divine Infant Jesus Who has willed to take this dear Sister, consecrated to the Divine Infancy during the time dedicated to this great mystery! She has gone to take possession of heaven in the name of all the Sisters, and to commence there an eternal establishment of the Community of Our Lady of Charity. She has gone to Paradise to adore, praise and love eternally the Most Holy Trinity with Jesus and Mary, and with all the blessed in the name and on the part of her very dear Sisters. This is the firstling of your house which you have offered to His Divine Majesty; it is your first sacrifice which shall be agreeable before the Throne of our good God.

But when I say that she has gone to heaven I do not say that she has arrived there yet, for souls are sometimes a long time on the way. Hence, you must pray for this dear Sister; on my part I shall not fail in this, God willing.

I am afraid that the fervor of our good Sisters, and the desire they have of mortifying themselves, make them endure this excessive cold, and they will get sick from too much exposure. I pray you, my good Mother, see that they are more careful of themselves.

As for the Communion for the sick, you can regulate it as you judge proper. I thank our Lord and His holy Mother that He has given you the house of La Monnaie.

I salute very cordially all our dear Sisters, and am with all my heart, my very dear good Mother,

Ever yours,
John Eudes, *Missionary-Priest.*

This resignation was truly admirable. He certainly founded on this Sister the greatest hopes, expecting she would aid in the development and the perfecting of his work. Now her death leaves him perfectly calm; it was a pain, and deep affliction to his fatherly heart, which was not so easily silenced.

Madame de Bois-David brought with her, as we have already stated, her young daughter to be raised as a boarder. Another trait of resemblance with Saint Chantal. At that time several ladies of distinction brought their daughters to receive there a good Christian education.

The action on this new activity on the part of his daughters, by the Blessed, has not come down to us, nor is it mentioned by any of his historians. It is certain that at the beginning he noticed with pleasure the increase in the class boarders, without, however, mentioning anything regarding this work in his letters; if he objected to it there would have been some trace of his displeasure. The class of boarders was ordinarily called the "Little Novitiate." They followed almost the same rule as the novices. Their costume was white; they wore a little silver heart on their breast like the Sisters. Their refectory was that of the Community; they entered it after the coulpes and the mortifications. They assisted also at the recreations, and from time to time said their coulpes of their little failings and defects. It was in this way that a good number of Religious was formed; Mlle. de Bois-David, herself, under the same name as her mother, became one of the most remarkable superiors of the Institute.

The boarding class was in reality a sort of *alumnae*. In our days several societies of men and women have founded similar places to assure themselves recruits for their institutes. This was not a new institution in the Church, nor in the history of monastic orders. Nearly all institutes had their origin in this way.

Towards the end of his life the Blessed institutor regulated this work, which bore the happiest fruits. As we shall see the Custom-Book was compiled with the aid of his niece, during her superiority, and gives a more detailed expression to his desires and intentions concerning the Order of Our Lady of Charity. But this Custom-Book includes: *The Directory of the Mistress of the Boarders, and the Daily Exercises for the Boarders.*

These two chapters, which have nothing in them that was borrowed from the Visitation, express fully the views of the founder. They contain a very complete rule for the boarding-school. When the universities or academies find they are behind the times in regard to their way of teaching they can change their methods on different points. But all their new methods could never succeed in forming those strong women, so admirable in their daily lives, who ornamented society at the end of the seventeenth and at the beginning of the eighteenth century. If it is true that the tree is known by its fruits we can conclude that the new methods are very inferior to the old. But the Blessed Eudes left to his daughters the pedagogic traditions of that great age in which they were pure and genuine. In particular, the advice to the mistresses given in those two chapters is worthy of the author of the "Admirable Infancy of the Most Holy Mother of God," from which, they say, Fenelon was inspired while composing his treatise on the "Education of Young Girls."

Some years previous death had deprived the convent of one of its first props. Sister Marie Desvallees passed away in the peace of our Lord, on February 25, 1656, at Coutances at the age of sixty-six years, forty-seven of which she spent in the most extraordinary state. Her death showed the great esteem in which she was held by the whole city. The chapter wished to have her remains interred in the church, an honor given only to the most distinguished persons. The Dominicans, on account of her devotion to the Rosary, also claimed the body. The seminary showed the rights they had, since it was her clearly expressed wish to have her remains inhumed there. It was, however, the Cure of the Parish of

Saint Nicholas who, on account of his modest determination to possess himself of her remains by the privilege of parish rights, buried her in the Chapel of Saint Joseph, in his church. But some months later M. de Langrie, by a daring act, took the remains back to the seminary.

The influence of Marie Desvallees had been quite considerable in the beginning of the Order of Our Lady of Charity. She sustained it by her prayers, and by her alms encouraged it in its moments of darkness, and prophesied its brilliant future, knowing as she did the designs of God over this humble beginning. It was certain proof that she was animated by a supernatural influence. All her predictions in relation to the Order were realized.

Moreover, her reputation for sanctity, supported by extraordinary facts, was recognized as far away as Canada.*

Her death was, for the Blessed, the commencement of a cruel trial, the recital of which belongs to her complete history.

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*The Blessed had had much correspondence with the first apostles of that country, especially with the first Vicar-Apostolic. This prelate had received the present copy of the life of Marie Desvallees, written by the Blessed. Therefore, it is in Canada that we may find this work.

CHAPTER XI

DEFINITE INSTALLATION—LETTERS OF DIRECTION

SEVERAL Religious had made their profession, and yet the Community had no house of its own; their abode at the time of which we write belonged to M. the President de Langrie, and its quarters became daily more inconvenient. This house was bounded on one side by the episcopal palace and on the other by the street. These indications, given us by the Annalist, give us the impression that it must have been located somewhere near the present Community, which is annexed to the Bishop's residence. The embarrassment and trouble of Mother Patin made her frequently beg of God to give them a better and more convenient location, where the work would have a better chance to develop. Our Lady of Charity came to her aid. One day our Blessed Mother showed her, in spirit, an old tumble-down house; she allowed her to see every spot, even the porch in front of the door, the terraces of the town, the cross that overtopped the Bishop's house, which she could see from the garden; at the same time, the Holy Virgin made her understand that it was the place she destined for her daughters. A short time after the sale of the house was proposed to Mother Patin, and she found it to be identical with the house shown her by the Blessed Virgin; this encouraged her in making the purchase; the Community bought the house about the end of 1656. It was merely a sort of store-house on or near the docks, where the boats discharged their merchandise, but there was plenty of space for building. The rest of the year, as well as the commencement of the following year, was spent in making arrangements to install the Community as soon as possible. When all was ready another trouble arose: the fear of the opposition of the sheriffs, notwithstanding the authorization the Blessed Eudes obtained ten years previously. Mother Patin wrote to Paris to implore him to let her know what was to be done in this circumstance, the usages and the law of that time rendering it very difficult for her. He replied:

My very dear Mother:

And in truth very beloved in Him Who is love eternal

I thank you most heartily for having done so much by your zeal and charity, for the house of our most holy Mother, and with so much goodness for my unworthy self. I thank you a thousand times for your kind and cordial letters. I can assure you that the sentiments with which God has inspired me in your regard cannot be expressed in words.

What you have written me concerning my dear Sisters has caused me much joy; I bless our Lord and His most holy Mother for all the graces they have granted them, and I beseech them to be very faithful and advance daily, and to endeavor to impress upon their hearts the perfect image of their most adorable Father, and of their most amiable Mother, by a careful and continual imitation of their virtues, especially their humility, their obedience, their charity and meekness, and in fine, their great love for the cross.

Sometime ago I procured the letters of the King for that business at Rome. I hope, with the help of God, to bring them to you soon, for I am feeling better, but I do not expect to do much more than go and return.

Fear not, my good Mother, if God is with you and for you, of whom shall you be afraid? You have so many times experienced the effect of His protection over the little house of Our Lady of Charity. Then why should you be afraid? Have confidence: He will finish what He has begun. It is true that we must always do what we can; but we can do three things now: the first, is to go so quietly and secretly that no one will be the wiser; secondly, to have M. de Bernieres write to Mme. de Longueville to pray her to tell the sheriffs not to interfere with you on this occasion; and thirdly, to speak to the sheriffs and those people around the King's person, and beg of them to allow you to go and take possession of this house. This being the way of submission and humility God will bless it, and it will succeed. If they refuse we can have recourse to Madame de Longueville. Do not be satisfied with what I am telling you, however, but ask some of your friends and the friends of the house to give you their opinion on the matter, and then may our dear Lord inspire you what to do.

I salute all our very dear Sisters in the sacred love of the Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, and am in truth without any reserve, my very dear Mother, Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

PARIS, March 7, 1657.

Here the wisdom of the Blessed equals his humility. He gives wise and prudent counsels, and full of diffidence in himself he does not wish that they take his words as their rule of conduct in this important affair.

The friends of the house were invited to assemble, and after the reading of the letter of the Blessed Eudes, they did not hesitate in concluding that the last suggestion was the most upright, the most Christian, and most laudable way out of the difficulty, and most conformable to the spirit and character of all interested in the affair. The mission to the sheriffs was handed over to M. de Bernieres, and proved a complete success; those that seemed the most opposed were disarmed by the loyalty of the proceedings, and abandoned their objections.

Four months after the purchase (it cost 10,650 livres) the Religious tranquilly took possession of their new house, on Palm Sunday, 1657, which that year fell on the 25th of March, a day so dear to the two Institutes of the Blessed servant of God. It would be difficult to give even a faint idea of the poverty of the house and its surroundings. The Community slept in the same dormitory as the Penitents; the windows were without a pane of glass, and during the first fifteen nights they had to get something to supply for blankets. The Penitents were no better off. They occupied an old ramshackle house at the lower end of the garden, that had one room below and another up on a loft.

Reverend M. Saint-Julien said Mass in a hastily arranged chapel, and during the following days the Sisters worked with might and main to try to arrange the house to meet the needs of the religious life. Sister M. of the Assumption, the first professed, built the wall that separated the novitiate from the Community, and, they tell us, she succeeded as well as the most skilful mason. But the poverty of the monastery was such that more than thirty years later the sleeping accommodations were so insufficient that they had as much difficulty as at the beginning, and this clearly proves the courage of those first Mothers. It was a long time before they could procure any postulants for the domestic work; no one applied for the rank of Lay-Sister; the Sisters had to do all the heavy work themselves in the kitchen, bake-room and laundry. This last work was particularly painful, as they had no wash-house; they had to do the washing in the kitchen, and draw all the water that was used from the wells; in the winter their hands often froze to the chain. As the wells were in the Sisters' garden the Penitents could not help them. It was only in 1670 that it was at all possible to make things more convenient. These details, though very insignificant, merit, we believe, a part in this history. Do they not recall to us the painful commencements of other religious orders, that are now reaping the harvest of the toil of their foundresses?

That year, 1657, the Order received another favor which we can appreciate but dimly. After having obtained from Louis XIV the letters of renewal the letters patent were registered in the Parliament of Normandy. The monastery had by this renewal obtained a perfectly legal permit to exist. The Blessed Eudes spent 2,000 livres on the furtherance of this action. As in our days the bureaucracy was voracious and very unfavorable to religious Communities.

Here we shall insert some letters of direction which, without enlightening us very much, will show at least the incessant and unremitting solicitude of the Blessed. About the end of the year 1659 he had to go to Rouen to give the exercises to the young aspirants to the priesthood.

On the vigil of Christmas he wrote to Mother Patin to console her in her interior trials, and counselled her to moderate her penances, and recommended to her the devotion to the Holy Infancy of Jesus. Since his mission in Beaune, and the intimate relations he had with the Venerable M. Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament, Carmelite Religious, those mysteries were the object of a very particular devotion with him, and his correspondence gives us many proofs of the zeal with which he endeavored to inspire it in others, especially in those under his direction.

My very dear and good Mother:

The Divine Infant Jesus be the Heart of our heart, and the spirit of our spirit.

All that you have written concerning the state and disposition of your soul is a certain proof that this most amiable Savior has a very particular love for you. There is nothing to fear, my dear Mother; you are in a good state; remain in peace and confidence, and abandon yourself for time and eternity to the most adorable Will of God, Who has established His reign in your heart, and Who shall reign there for a blessed eternity. But I beseech you not to torment yourself about doing more than you have done hitherto; in fact, you ought to moderate your mortifications, and give to your poor worn-out body that rest it needs so much, as well as all the remedies necessary to help you to get well and strong. If you do so I assure you it will be very agreeable to Almighty God, much more agreeable than if you were to do otherwise.

I salute, very cordially, all our dear Sisters in general, and each one in particular, and I pray them every day to perform their devotions to the Divine Infant Jesus, to His holy Mother and to Saint Joseph, and to strive as much as possible to do this with an ever-increasing devotion to this Infant-God, to imitate His humility, His simplicity, His innocence, His obedience, His meekness, His tenderness and his cordial charity, but especially His great love for His most Blessed Mother.

I pray you not to forget to recommend to the Son and to the Mother him who is in the sacred love of their most Holy Heart.

Ever yours,
JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*
ROUEN, December 24, 1659.

His niece, Sister M. of the Nativity, suffered on account of his long absence at different intervals; he wrote to her:

My very dear Sister:

May the Divine Will be our guide in all things!

It is true that *my* months are sometimes very long, and longer than I am aware of at times, but not longer than I wish, for by the mercy of my Savior it seems to me that I have no desire in this world, nor in the next, except one, which is to leave myself entirely in the hands of God, so that He may do with me as He pleases, and that He may make me do everywhere whatever is most agreeable to Him. Hence, I cannot inform you when I will return to Caen. I only know that it will be when God wills.

You describe your interior very well, indeed, my dear Sister, and I have only one reply to make to you, and that is that you ought to endeavor not to be disquieted about your poverty and your miseries, but abide in peace, in humility, in patience, in submission, and in abandonment to the Divine Will, in obedience and confidence to your superior, and in fidelity to the Rules and observances. I recommend especially to you, my dear daughter, three things: the first, to conserve very carefully in the innermost recesses of your heart a strong and generous resolution to overcome the defects that you recognize in yourself; secondly, to have a pure and upright intention in every thing you do, protesting often to our Lord that you wish to do nothing except what tends to His greater honor and glory, and to accomplishe in all things His adorable Will; the third to bear within your heart, and testify by all your actions a great love, a great sweetness and cordiality towards all your Sisters.

I beseech the most amiable Infant Jesus to live and reign in your heart, and in the hearts of all our dear Sisters, whom I salute in general and in particular, with all the affection of which I am capable, wishing them a thousand blessings and a great abundance of graces to employ holily this new year, according to the holy Will of God.

I am delighted that your brother and my nephew is so near the time when he shall consecrate himself to the Divine Majesty by the vows of holy religion. I supplicate the Infinite Goodness to bestow upon him the graces necessary for so holy an action. When you write to him I pray you to recommend me to him. I am with all my heart, my dear niece and daughter,

Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

ROUEN, January 7, 1660.

That same year the Blessed remained at Rouen during the Lenten season. The following letter, if he had known it, would have determined the uncertainty of Reverend P. Costil, who asked if he left from Caen or from Rouen, for the mission of Quinze-Vingts. It was written on February 15, 1660. It is very interesting, for it touches on several points concerning the devotion to the Holy Heart of Mary, the relations of the Blessed Eudes with the Visitation, and the sanctification of Lent:

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear and good Mother:

The Divine will be our guide in all things!

I was very much rejoiced at what you told me regarding our dear Sister M. of the Infant Jesus, and I render a thousand thanks to our Lord and His most holy Mother. I shall do all that I can after we have conferred together.

You have given me great joy, also, by telling me that you celebrate the feast of the Holy Heart of Mary, our admirable Mother. I thank her adorable Son for all the graces He bestowed upon you that day, on yourself and on all your dear daughters. I bless and praise Him with my whole heart that He has conducted you, my dear Mother, by the way He Himself walked, which is by the road of tribulation, desolation and the Cross. It is a very great favor that He has given you, and do not doubt it, but accept with all your heart your cross for the love of the most amiable Crucified and of His holy Mother, and abandon yourself entirely to the Divine Will.

Last Thursday I gave an exhortation in the large Monastery of the Visitation, and yesterday I gave one in the little monastery. I saw the Mothers superior of both houses, and I was much edified, especially with the first named, who is, indeed, a very holy woman. *

We spoke very much concerning Mother Frances-Margaret Patin, for whom she has great affection. But she told me one thing that troubled me; it is that she is afraid you will be elected superior for the foundation of Saint-Lo, where Mother Chary had to go. I beseech you, my very dear Mother, to let me know if there is any fear of this; if so, it will be a catastrophe for the house of Our Lady of Charity. Write to me and tell me sincerely what there is to it.

This good Mother told me she hoped to have the lives of your first Mothers soon written, and she would send you some.

I salute all our dear Sisters in the sacred love of the Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, and I beg them to visit every day during Lent the desert where our most amiable Saviour is fasting for our sins and for the sins of all men, and there, prostrate at His feet, adore Him in His interior and exterior sufferings, and thank Him for all He suffered; ask pardon for all the sins of mankind, and unite your disposition with those He had in fasting and praying, in His solitude and silence. Strive to imitate Him in all these things; then go to our Blessed Mother, who is in a state conformable to that of her dear Son—pray to her, honor her, salute her in this state, thank her, pray * * * etc.

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*The relations of the Blessed John Eudes with the Visitation have been very numerous and frequent. History does not inform us when it began; but we know that the perfume of the lovely virtues of Saint Francis de Sales still floated over Paris when the young Eudes arrived there at the beginning of 1623 to make his novitiate in the Oratory. Many times Cardinal de Berulle and Father de Condren spoke of this amiable prelate to their pious disciples, to urge them on to the practice of his angelic virtue, especially his ardent zeal and his great meekness. Perhaps, also in his different journeys to Paris, he may have met with Saint Jane Frances de Chantal. The dates of their presence in that city permit this supposition, and the mysterious attraction between saints makes it more admissible.

But we enter the domain of history when, after his devotion to the pest-stricken, the Blessed was sent to Caen by his superiors. In the same house of the Oratory, as daily mess-mate, he found Monsignor Camus, ancient Bishop of Belley, **the author of the spirit of Saint Francis de Sales,** his disciple and friend.

This prelate held in high esteem the oratorical talent of the Blessed John Eudes. One day he rendered him this fine tribute, on seeing him descending from the pulpit: ''Assuredly I have heard many good preachers in my lifetime; indeed, I heard the most perfect of the kind in France and in Italy, but I must acknowledge that I never heard one who could dive so deep into the human heart as this good Father has done.'' He succeeded in inspiring him with the love of Saint Francis de Sales, and with a taste for his ascetic doctrine.

The foundation of the Visitation of Caen brought him into direct relations with this holy Order. In several letters from the Blessed to Mother Patin he made particular mention of Mother de Maupeou. This remarkable Religious was the first superior of the Monastery of Caen; she was the first of Paris, like Mother Patin, and she governed it later, as well as the House of the Magdalens. The letter mentioning these relations were written from Paris from 1660 to 1662. The Blessed went there again during the long sojourn he made there, for the needs of Our Lady of Charity.

The reading of this work makes known his intimacy with Mother Patin. The letters written from Paris, and which we shall cite very soon, speak of one Mother de Moncon. It is impossible to know to which monastery she belonged. She did not belong to the first monastery, and the third had been hardly founded one year. The second is today occupied by the Religious of Our Lady of Charity, called Saint Michael. If it was this house the Blessed Eudes certainly had frequent visits there. It is a remembrance that ought to be dear to his daughters.

The superior of the first monastery of Rouen, spoken of in the present letter, was Mother Jane-Mary de Bauguemare. Remarkable for her religious virtues, she contributed to the foundation of several monasteries. She died holily on July 27, 1712, having been professed sixty-seven years. They wrote us from Rouen that she **was particularly devout to the Sacred Hearts.**

I remain with all my heart, speaking to the dear Mother and her daughters, my very dear Sisters,

Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

The Blessed institutor profited of all these occasions to propagate his favorite devotions. In his works, "The Exercises of Piety," "The Life and Kingdom of Jesus," "The Manual of His Congregation," he endeavored to have the different stages of the life of our Lord and of His divine Mother particularly honored.

In the following letter, which must have been a tardy response to feast-day greetings, he inculcates by his own example submission and entire dependence on the good pleasure of God, and recommends those virtues he loved so much:

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear and well-beloved Sisters:

The Divine Will be our guide in all things!

I thank you most heartily for your cordial letter, which has rejoiced me very much.

When I was leaving Caen I thought I would be only about two months on my journey, but my will did not agree

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The superioress and foundress of the second monastery was Mother Mary Frances-Elie. In an epidemic that ravaged Rouen she offered her life for the cessation of the scourge; her sacrifice was accepted; she was the last victim of the awful visitation; she died of this disease August 13, 1662.

What was the subject of those entertainments? We do not know. But if Mother de Bauguemare was so devoted to the Sacred Hearts are we not allowed to infer that she heard their first apostle expound this beautiful devotion? The feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was solemnly celebrated for the first time in her monastery, on January 29, 1698.

The Annals of this house state that the office was sung by the Eudist Fathers, and they add: "It was only just; these worthy Fathers had been a long time devoted to the Sacred Heart." These words are a proof that at that date the Religious of this monastery were well acquainted with the apostolate of the Blessed Eudes. Here is another fact which proves that this knowledge was not limited to that house.

There was published by one Eustache Herault, in the year 1700, perhaps on the occasion of the feast of the Visitation, a book called "The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ." We read on page 33: "This title Heart of Jesus may be understood as a part of the adorable body of the Savior, which bears that name, or of the interior sentiments of Jesus Christ in general, or in fine, of his love for us. It is from the second of these three senses that the authors of the two excellent offices drew their theme. These two offices are in use today even, by the most illustrious societies of the Church. (The Sulpicians and the Eudists), who are the heirs of the piety of their holy founders, and of their singular attachment to the sacred Person of Jesus Chrst, in keeping this particular feast."

The author of this book was evidently deceived when he attributed to the Blessed the Office of the interior of Jesus Christ. M. Olier, one of his disciples, composed it. The feast instituted in 1670 by the Blessed Eudes, and for which he composed an Office, was called by him: "**Festum Divinissimi Cordis Jesu,**" "feast of the Divine Heart of Jesus." Besides, it was not taken from this devotion in the restricted sense spoken of by the author. His compositions, as well as the Office, speak of the material and of the spiritual object of this worship—that is to say, of the organ which is the Heart, and the sentiments that animated it, especially of love which is the strongest of those sentiments, and the most worthy of veneration. Aside from those errors this work shows the priority of the apostolate of the Blessed Eudes. Regarding the particular relations of the Blessed with the Visitation of Caen we shall note the three following facts:

While he was soliciting the Bulls for the approval of the Order of Our Lady of Charity he asked the prayers of the Sisters of the Visitation, through Mme. de Camilly, for this intention.

Shortly after the renovation of Vows, which took place by virtue of the Bulls with my thoughts, for I wished to be at least eight months; but I am at a loss to know why I had that wish. I only desire what God wills, and His will is mine. I do not know of any reason to have it, because I recognize only the will of God in that, and I do not know what that will intends for the future.

It is very evident that Divine Providence allows me to come here to do something for Him; I am certainly only a poor pitiful instrument in His hands, but everything I do is for His greater honor and glory. Pray, my dear Sisters, that God may make me agreeable to Him, that all my work may be for the glory of His holy Name, and that He may not have any regard to my utter unworthiness.

It is true that I have no cause of disquiet in your regard, for I am well aware of the extreme goodness and truly maternal love of our admirable Mother for the daughters of her Heart, and I know when I leave you in her hands you are safe. However, that does not hinder me from placing you every day in the Sacred Heart of our Divine Lord during holy Mass, or from visiting you every day in spirit. I pray you also, my dear Sisters, to come every day and work with us in this mission, by your prayers and other exercises of piety; you can do nothing more agreeable to His Divine Majesty.

I am rejoiced that the Infinite Goodness has bestowed so many blessings upon your little Community; I humbly be-

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of Alexander VII, Mother Patin received a visit from the venerated Mother Frances-Magdalen de Chaugy, so famous for her zeal in procuring the canonization of Saint Francis de Sales, and for the important services she rendered the Visitation. Mother Madeleine-Augustine d'Alegre brought her to the Charity. Through veneration for Mother Patin, Mother de Chaugy took back some lace with her, that had been commenced by Mother Patin, saying that it was the work of a saint and she would keep it as a relic. "These two Mothers," added the Annalist of the Charity, "were very friendly with our Sisters, and left quite satisfied with everything in this dear little monastery." The Visitation of Caen had a great veneration for Marie Desvallees, and a great confidence in her. This veneration went so far as to ask and obtain miracles through her intercession. Four cures were obtained in this monastery, and are recounted in the "Annals of Our Lady of Charity." These attestations are signed by Mothers de Montaigu and d'Alegre. One the Religious that was cured was named Anne-Theresa de Matignon; one of the boarders was the daughter of M. de Croisette, governor of Caen. These facts took place during the years 1672 and 1673. At the same time they gave proof of the influence of the Blessed Eudes over this monastery, and established the relations continued after the death of Mother Patin. Any reader who has mastered the life of the Blessed knows that he was the principal director and defender of Sister Marie Desvallees.

We must note, also, that the first monastery of Paris, and in general, the Visitation adopted at the same time the feast of the Holy Heart of Mary. The preceding facts sufficiently indicate the origin of this devotion. The Blessed preached, himself, in the monasteries of Autun, Beaune, and of Bourgogne in 1648. Every one knows that one of the principal apparitions of the Sacred Heart to the Blessed Margaret Mary took place on February 8th, a day when they were celebrating the feast of the Holy Heart of Mary in the monastery. On that day the pious apostle of that devotion and all his disciples were in union of prayer with her. The Blessed Margaret Mary was not completely ignorant of her precursor. In one of her letters she spoke of a society of missionaries devoted to the Sacred Heart.

We must not forget that for a certain space of time the Religious of the Visitation used the same offices as did the Blessed Eudes for the celebration of that feast, as well as for the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

In all his missions the Blessed visited the monasteries, and strove to propagate his dear devotions. The extent of his relations with the Visitation does not permit us to doubt that some of the monasteries of that Order had heard him preach on the Sacred Heart, as he had done in the Abbey of Montmartre and other places.

We hope that very soon an abler pen and one more authorized will compare the spirit of the Blessed Eudes with that of the Blessed Margaret Mary; the promises made to these two true adorers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the numerous resemblances that exist in their writings must result in an augmentation of glory for both.

seech Him to continue to bless you; to this effect I conjure you, my dear Sisters, to study these three things very particularly: humility, obedience and mutual charity.

I am, much more than I can tell you or than you can think, in the sacred love of the Most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, my very dear and beloved Sisters;

Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

PARIS, July 20, 1660.

This letter was written during the mission of Quinze-Vingts, which had been begun towards the feast of the Ascension, and which lasted seven weeks. The ardent apostle knew how to associate his daughters with his missionary labors, and made use of this means on all occasions to inspire them with the virtue that should characterize them most—zeal for the salvation of souls.

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CHAPTER XII

ROMAN AFFAIRS—PRELIMINARIES FOR THE JOURNEY OF REVEREND M. BONIFACE, 1661

BEING very attached and submissive to the Holy See the Blessed Eudes wished to give to his Institutes, as a solid basis, the unassailable and immovable rock of Peter. The reader is already acquainted with the steps taken, and the journeys made to Rome by Reverend P. Mannoury. The lack of success in that quarter did not discourage the zealous and perservering founder. The letters that we have cited already show how preoccupied he was concerning this matter. He neglected no occasion of getting all the information possible to succeed in Rome, and finally arrived at the conviction that he ought to send a particular envoy, one who could remain there whatever length of time would be required. Many reasons urged him to try this experiment. Moreover, during the mission of Quinze-Vingts he made the acquaintance of M. Boniface, and he thought he would confide to him his interests at Rome.

This meeting, however, was for the Blessed a source of the most painful trial of his life. In the process of his beatification it has been, up to the present, the strongest objection. A complete history tells how, on the occasion of his presenting a petition imprudently and without an order, the Blessed Eudes was accused of high treason towards Louis XIV and exiled in Normandy during seven years; and how, from letters written for his justification to Louis XIV, the Promoter of the Faith ably drew the formidable accusation of Gallicanism, an accusation, however, that has rendered evident the perfect orthodoxy of the Blessed Servant of God. The Sacred Congregation, assembled to study this particular fact, was moved to render the following judgment: *"Ex documentis productis minime inferri potest Venerabilem Servuum Dei Gallicanis doctrinis quom odocumque induisse."* "These documents now exhibited are not conclusive evidences that the Blessed Servant of God had, in any manner whatever, inclined towards the doctrines of Gallicanism."

Here we will only occupy ourselves with the steps taken by M. Boniface to obtain the Bulls of approbation for the Order of Our Lady of Charity, and the study of the documents will show us that this priest (all authors are unanimous in acknowledging him as pious and intelligent, and well informed as to the usages of the Roman Court) was a faithful and able proxy, and most desirous of succeeding in his undertaking. This was the underlying motive that urged him to make his sorry petition. For the rest the reader may be the judge.

The letters of the Blessed, by their length and number, may slacken interest in this history. But they will make known and will show the great desire that prompted him to give to his dear daughters a proper standing in the Church. Several points of his ascetic doctrine are also touched upon, and the recollected soul can glean many good thoughts from their perusal. The first letter in which the Blessed treated this grave affair appears to have been written from Paris. It is a reply, without doubt, to a letter in which Mother Patin announced to him that *his good friends*—that is to say, his enemies, were turning Cardinal Barberini against the Sisters on account of their devotion to the Holy Heart of Mary.

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear Mother:

The Divine Will be our guide in all things!

I thank and bless our Lord for the favor He has done you, by commanding the wind and the tempest, and bringing calm and tranquillity to your soul. I thank Him much more for the grace He has given you by allowing you to suffer in the way you have mentioned in your letter. My dear Mother, that state is a most precious one for your soul. Oh, what a rich gift from the Divine Goodness! Oh, how you ought to thank God for such desolations, which are far beyond the consolations of this world! These are the greatest tests of His friendship for souls that are dear to Him. If we should remain on our knees a hundred years we could not thank Him sufficiently for the smallest affliction that can happen to us, as He said Himself one day to the Blessed Henry Suzo of the Order of Saint Dominic.

But, my dear Mother, I conjure you to close the door to the thought that you have no vocation for the House of Our Lady of Charity, for it is not from God, it is most certainly contrary to truth, and I have never known a more visible vocation, more clear or more manifest than yours.

Let us hope that that news from Rome is false; but I fear it is only too true, for the Cardinal Antonio Barbarini, whom you mentioned, and the Cardinal Antonio is but one and the same person. It is true that we have never spoken at Rome of the Daughters of the Heart of the Blessed Virgin, and I do not know at all how it happened.

Be that as it may, we must only resign ourselves totally to the adorable Will of God, and confide in His infinite goodness, which conducts everything in the manner most agreeable to Him, no matter what we wish.

However, we must not be discouraged, but do all we can ourselves. For this end I repeat what I said before, that it is necessary to send a man expressly to Rome, and for the reasons that I have already given.

I have been told I might expect other news; but, however, we must prepare to send some one in case of need. It is not enough that they have recommended the business to Monsignor du Puy; it is necessary to send an ecclesiastic to solicit it. I know of one in Paris who would be recommendable, and who I think would not refuse me. I wrote to Paris to know when Monsignor du Puy will leave, in order to speak with him concerning this question, and to see this priest. If it would be agreeable to Monsignor du Puy he might accompany him on the journey. I pray you to get the money that will be needed to defray the expenses—that is, if we find him disposed to go, and have some copies of the letters of Monsignor Mole, and the last sentence of verification, as also of your Constitutions, but this last is not so pressing.

I salute very cordially all our dear Sisters, and remain, my very good Mother,

Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

This letter, as well as the one following, were sent to Mother Patin, with news from Rome, doubtless through the agency of Reverend P. Mannoury, who was in charge of the business at issue.

The Bishop of Puy, of whom the Blessed spoke, was Monsignor de Maupas who, in the name of the clergy of France, went to Rome to petition for the canonization of Saint Francis de Sales. This prelate was both distinguished and pious, and had a high esteem for the Blessed Eudes. When he became Bishop of Evreux, he confided to him the foundation and direction of his seminary; he had even expressed the desire of having him for his coadjutor.

The following letter treats but indirectly of the affair at Rome, but it shows the firmness with which the Blessed pursued the object of his desire. He absolutely and forever rejects the union of his Order with that of the Sisters of Refuge of Avignon. There the Penitents were governed by the older Penitents, who had become Religious in that convent. The chief point of interest lay between the monastery and the seminary of Coutances, which, to oblige the Sisters, had purchased the Aunay estate. The horror of the Blessed for the lawsuit and the wrangling was very apparent.

My very dear and good Mother:

The Divine Will be our guide in all things!

I praise God with my whole heart for all the graces that He has given you, and for all the holy dispositions He has given to your soul. I thank Him also for having multiplied the number of our dear Sisters, your good daughters, but especially for the goodwill you have shown my niece,* for which I am very grateful.

I was rejoiced at first on reading your letter to see that your affairs were getting along nicely in Rome, but this patterning after Avignon, of which you spoke, I will not allow; it cannot be suffered. I certainly would rather see the house utterly destroyed. But I have confidence that our Lord and His holy Mother will prevent such a disaster. When M. de la Boissiere will come I shall have a talk with him about it.

I have seen our dear Mother de Maupeou, and shall see her again, God willing, after the mission here is over.

That affair about the Aunay estate is very unpleasant. Our Brothers of Coutances have written to me, saying it will ruin their seminary if it is not settled. I pray you, my dear Mother, to consider that I have concluded this affair to give you all pleasure, and contrary to the wishes of our Brothers, who bought this land when no one else wanted it. It is true that after the conclusion of the affair you or some one else told me that M. de Saint Nicholas wanted it, but I had engaged it for some one else who, too, was asking for it; but then, when M. de Saint-Nicholas got it, and had to undergo the same trouble that we had to undergo, he did not fail to get indemnification. Now, my dear Mother, I wish you to do to them what you wish they would do to you in such a case.

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*He spoke in this letter of Frances Herson, daughter of Pierre Herson, and of Marie Eudes, and sister to Mother M. of the Nativity. She took the habit of the Order on July 25, 1662, at the age of twenty-one years, made her profession as a simple Lay-Sister on March 25, 1665, and died on March 26, 1733, at the age of 92 years. She was known in religion by the name of Sister Mary of Saint Francis. Her Blessed uncle predicted her vocation when she was yet very young in the boarders' class, and at that time said she would be a Lay-Sister. During her postulancy or her novitiate, which corresponds to the date of this letter, she was bled in the arm by an unskilful surgeon. For a long time they feared that she would be unable to remain in any capacity. Out of respect for her uncle Mother Patin kept her, nevertheless. Hence his allusion in the foregoing letter. Sister M. of Saint Francis addressed herself in prayer to Saint Francis de Sales and was cured.

Later on three other little nieces of the Blessed entered the monastery: Sister Mary of the Nativity Eudes in 1713, Sister M. of Saint Joseph Eudes in 1729, and Anne Pelve, daughter of Pascal Pelve and of Marie Herson.

Their longevity is no less remarkable than their piety. All lived to be over eighty years old. The children and grandchildren of Isaac Eudes formed a family that was visibly blessed by God.

We have been deceived in this. But in order that Christian charity be not wounded I pray you to do in this matter what your Rules of the Visitation oblige in such a contingency.

I salute, with all cordiality possible, all our dear Sisters in general and each one in particular, and ask you to pray and aid us with your prayers on this mission, which is so important. I remain, my very dear Mother,

Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

The two preceding letters did not succeed in overcoming the difficulties that opposed Reverend Mother Patin. The Blessed wrote to her again; this letter is rather mixed up with a discussion of affairs:

J. M. J.

The Divine Will be our guide in all things!

To speak according to nature I would compassionate you very much, but to speak according to the spirit I find you more worthy of envy than pity, for the greatest happiness that you can have is to be made conformable to Jesus Christ, our Lord, who is our adorable Head; but the state of privation, of death and of annihilation, in which you are, has much conformity with that which this most amiable Savior bore while He lived in this world. Give yourself, then, to Him, my dear Mother, and bear this condition of things with Him, and in His spirit, as long as it pleases Him, and meantime strive to do three things: 1, not to dampen the spirit by excess of sorrow, but take very great care to acquire virtue, and divine strength, in order to be able to support your trials; 2, to accept this state of annihilation saying, with the Son of God, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit;" 3, to abandon yourself entirely to the most holy Will of God, repeating with our Lord: "Not my will, but Thine be done."

I come now to your affair, my very dear Mother. I saw a few persons who have been to Rome about their own concerns, something similar to yours; they told me that there is never anything of moment done without sending some one expressly there to represent us, for the same reasons that I told you about.

You must remember, also, what Monsignor du Puy said to me, and which I mentioned in my letters to you. What you say about Mother de Maupeou ought not to stop you. I am sure after what I have said she will enter into my sentiments.

I have been also informed by different persons who have been to Rome lately what the probable cost will be. They all say that it will be moderate, at least two hundred livres to go, and as much for the return trip, and that it will cost about four hundred livres to live there for one year, but he will not be there so long. Although we cannot determine precisely what the entire expense will be I believe it will not exceed six hundred livres, but what is that in an affair of so much importance? We should have no regard for expense in a necessity as pressing as this one is, fearful that our Lord would one day address to us the reproach He made once to Saint Theresa, when she balanced her money against the foundation of a monastery. The Son of God said to her: "Have you, then, more regard for money than for Me?"

He who offers to go to Rome for one hundred crowns would be a mocker, or a man who wants to go to Rome and make the journey at your expense. But has he all the qualities for a business like yours? If he has, do as you please, but remember, my dear Mother, what I have written to you of the man who is here, and who offers himself to go through pure charity, without any self-interest. He is a good, learned, intelligent man, who knows the Italian language, and has several friends and acquaintances in Rome.

Now the time is coming rapidly and the journey must be made. Let me know your very latest resolution, in God's holy name. Have much confidence in a person who loves the house of the holy Virgin, as I love it, and who speaks to you with truth and sincerity, and am with my whole heart,

Ever yours,
JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

The presence of M. Boniface in the same place as the Blessed does not permit us to doubt that this letter was written from Paris. Reverend P. Costil indicates the date as that of September 21, 1660. The persevering manager had no doubt made the journey to see Monsignor de Maupus and have an understanding with M. Boniface. Mother Patin at length yielded. The last words of the following letter, written at the same time to Sister M. of the Assumption Eustache, show us that she yielded only with much resistance. This letter indicates the troubles of the holy institutor, and his perfect conformity to the will of God:

J. M. J.

I thank you, my dear daughter, and all our dear Sisters, for your charitable remembrance and your sincere cordiality. I assure you that I never forget you before God, and I bring you every day, all in general, and each one in particular, to the holy altar. If I followed my inclinations I assure you I would rather be in Caen to entertain you sometimes on the incomparable goodness of our most adorable Savior than to be walking the streets of Paris. But God guard and guide us ever to do His holy Will, and give us the grace to know what we have to do in this world to follow Him closely with *Corde magno et animo volenti.*

Oh, what joy to know that it is our only affair, and that all the powers of earth and hell cannot hinder us from accomplishing that will for one single moment; still, we must not hinder ourselves, but aid ourselves to do so.

I salute with my best wishes, or rather with the sacred love of the Most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, all my dear Sisters, but especially our good Mother,

Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

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CHAPTER XIII

JOURNEY OF REVEREND M. BONIFACE—RULES FOR THE PENITENTS REQUIRED BY ROME, 1661—LETTERS OF THE BLESSED EUDES ON THIS SUBJECT

MOTHER PATIN gave her power of attorney to M. Boniface on October 6, 1660, and one thousand livres for his journey. He did not undertake this journey until the following year, and arrived in Rome about the middle of May. On May 30th he wrote a letter to the Blessed, which showed his activity in the matters and that the beginning of his work promised to be successful. He had seen the agent or banker, and had a long talk with Monsignor Pagnani, the illustrious Doctor of Canon Law. His prejudice was very marked, and his answers regarding the fourth vow were very convincing. He scored one point, which made him feel he would succeed, which was the direct nomination of a new commission by the Sovereign Pontiff, this commission being charged with the study of this question. As for the rest the Blessed summed it up in the following letter to Mother Patin:

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear Mother:

Yesterday I sent the solemn declaration of the Grand Vicars which you sent with several others that M. Boniface required from the Grand Vicars of Paris, regarding the Religious of the Hotel-Dieu in that city, who are always among sick men, convalescents, doctors, surgeons, apothecaries, hospital orderlies and other servants, and even have to serve women who come there to be confined; besides, concerning your Sisters of the Visitation who are charged with the Magdalens to prove that no disorder occurs in those places.

Sometime ago I spoke to the Bishop of Bayeux concerning this, and he said they were considering this subject in Rome; he wrote the same thing, at my request, to some of his friends in Rome, so that they would help on the approbation of our Order. I spoke to him again this week, and he assured me that he will send in his approbation and everything necessary, when the right time comes. He is expecting his own Bulls tomorrow, and will be consecrated very soon; he hopes to be in his diocese by All-Saints. This is the reason why I wrote to M. Boniface, that if he sees there would be danger of a refusal not to press the point, but to wait quietly until he has word from Monsignor.

Yesterday I got a letter from him in which he stated that there was great difficulty over this rule, the governing of Penitents by the Religious. Some had great hopes and buoyed up his courage, so he worked night and day to advance it, for, you know, he has no other occupation in Rome. To overcome this difficulty he showed that the Penitents are separated from the Religious by a wall; that they have their dormitory, refectory and chapel entirely separate, also; that there is a door in this wall through which two of the older Religious, chosen by the superior, enter every morning into the Penitents' quarters, and leave again in the evening; that during the night they are watched over through a grate or trellis window; that there is always a lamp lighted in the middle of their dormitory before a statue of the Blessed Virgin; that they give the charge of watching over the giddy ones of the flock to those Penitents who are more settled, and more established in virtue; that during the night they keep under lock and key those who would be capable of causing trouble or mischief to others; that they receive no one by force into the house—only those who, touched by God, enter voluntarily for the purpose of conversion and penitence.

He said, too, that expecting all these things were in force he made use of them in order to do away with the difficulty that always obtained. I tell you now so that you may practice all these things as much as possible, if they have not been done up to this; because if this business succeeds, they will write from Rome to the Nuncio (this is customary in similar circumstances) to inform themselves as to the truth of this statement; hence, the necessity of seeing that it be found true. See to it, my dear Mother, I pray you.

I wrote to him that they are not watched through a trellis window, and to strive to suppress this proposition, but the rest would go . . . . .

I saw the good Mother de Maupeou; I hope to see her again today.

I cordially salute all our dear Sisters in general and particular, and I pray you to tell them to remember me in their prayers. I am to the Mother and her daughters, in the sacred love of the Most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary,

Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

The ending of these letters may appear tedious through constant repetition, but we dare not suppress them, since they breathe only devotion to the Sacred Hearts.

This letter shows all the difficulties raised through a measure of extreme prudence by the Roman Court. It helped materially in the formation of the Rules for the Penitents. But what they failed to give was the unction, and the ardent love for souls that the Blessed put into his definite compilation. Left to himself he would have been less severe. Besides, the needs and requirements of that period differed much from those of today, for at that time and during the lifetime of the holy founder, the Penitents hardly exceeded thirty. He was not destined to cast into the soil the fruitful germ, nor to see its marvelous development.

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear Mother:

The Divine Will be our guide in all things!

I am enclosing you a letter I received yesterday from M. Boniface, in order to give you an idea of the plan formed by him, or by what he has represented; you can return it to me as soon as possible.

It is not necessary that I should send you all your rules, but only what I have written regarding the Penitents and how they are to be governed, and to enter the following articles:

1. They should receive only those who, touched by the grace of God, enter voluntarily to do penance;

2. That while they are there they strictly keep the cloister;

3. That they are never to be received in this monastery to become Religious, but if they desire this state of life they should be sent to those monasteries in other cities where Penitents are received;

4. That they have their dormitory, chapel and refectory entirely separated from the Religious;

5. If any prove to be incorrigible she should be sent away;

6. Although they are in the same monastery with the Religious they must be separated at least by a wall, in order that there may be no intercourse between them, except by order and permission of the superioress;

7. That there be a door in this wall, through which two Religious enter every morning, by order of the superior, to go to the quarters of the Penitents, to be with them during the day where they are all together, in order to watch over their conduct, to superintend their devotions and read spiritual books to them, at the hours marked; outside of that time they are to perform manual work. In the evening after prayers and examen the Penitents retire to their cells, and the two Religious are to retire to their own sleeping apart-

ments, after they close the door and bring the key to the superioress;

8. Among the Religious they make choice of the oldest both as to age and manners to send during the day to remain with the Penitents; for greater security they do not send the same Religious continuously, but change them from time to time;

9. If there is some one among the converted who is suspected, she is placed under lock and key in her cell during the night;

10. During the night there should be a lighted lamp burning before a statue of the Blessed Virgin, and one of the Religious should watch over them through a grate placed in such a way that she cannot speak to them without being heard by the other Religious;

11. That no person who is suspected in any way, be it even their parents, or any man or woman, be allowed to speak with them, except in the presence of one of the Religious.

All these things having been shown forth by M. Boniface it remains for us now to put them into instant practice, and have the will to do everything that is necessary. The name of the Converted that you will find in this letter is the name they have given in Rome, instead of Penitents.

If you can have P. Mannoury put all these Rules in good order, so that you can make out the plan that M. Boniface is asking for, and when it is finished you may send it to Lisieux by some man; it would be advisable, in order that he arrive the sooner, that he ride on horseback. But I do not wish that he would stay with us, on account of sickness that is here, but after having conferred with you, my dear Mother, and after having seen your house, you give him the Rules of the Penitents, with this letter, then he can take two days to go to Camilly for this business.

Send me as soon as you can the attestations of the parish priests, and those of the principal priests of the city, if you can get them, for the Bishop of Bayeux did not get his papers yet, so his entrance into his diocese will be delayed some. Send me back M. Boniface's letter, and address yours to me to The Mazarin Palace, Paris, for I am living at present with the Bishop of Coutances, and shall remain there until I can secure a room to take the remedies and the rest that I need so much for some trifling trouble that is of no consequence.

I remain with my whole heart, my dear Mother,

Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

PARIS, September 10, 1661.

The illness of which he spoke was a continued fever, which shortly after put his life in danger. He did not trouble about it. The strengthening of the two Institutes caused him more anxiety. He waited for death with tranquillity and patience, when he was cured contrary to the expectations of his doctors.

It is probable that Reverend P. Mannoury made the journey and did the work of which he spoke.

The wise instructions indicated above form the first chapter of the Constitution *of the end of the Institute;* and God has visibly blessed their observance. The archives of the different houses prove that, if through some necessity they were obliged to neglect them, they had to suffer grave inconvenience. Nothing could safeguard the authority of the Sisters better, nor could augment their prestige in a greater degree among the souls confided to them.

Although ill and very busy in Paris the Blessed neglected nothing for the sanctification of his Religious; he wrote to them on December 3rd of that same year, 1661.

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear Sisters:

The Divine Will be our guide in all things!

I render infinite thanks to our Good Jesus and His most holy Mother for the immense blessings they have bestowed upon your Community, and I supplicate them to augment them a hundredfold, and to give you the grace to make the good use of them, which they require.

Hence, I conjure you, my very dear Sisters, to be very faithful and exact in the observance of your Rules and Constitutions, and in the practice of all the holy virtues, especially humility, obedience, mutual charity, zeal for the salvation of souls, of submission to the holy Will of God, of pure love for Jesus, and of special devotion to His blessed Mother.

It is what your good Mother teaches you every day by her word and example; it is what I have preached to you, and shall continue to preach to you all my life. For we have nothing else to do in this world than to study how to please God, and there is no other means to please Him than that.

I thank you, also, my very dear Sisters, for your charitable remembrance; and continue, if you please, to hold for certain that I shall never forget you at the holy altar; for in truth you are much more dear to me at that moment than I could ever express.

If I would not look at everything in the light of the holy Will of God, life in Paris would be very wearisome to me, but it is there where I must negotiate all our affairs and principally yours. There is nothing else to keep me here.

Pray our dear Lord and His holy Mother for me, that they give me the grace to do their will in everything, no matter what the price I may have to pay, provided it be agreeable to them; this I assure you is my only desire.

I pray them for you all, for the Mother and the daughters, that you may become according to their Heart; it is in this most Sacred Heart that I am and shall be eternally, my very dear Sisters,

Ever yours.
JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

Historians after having spoken of the missions that he gave at Quinze-Vingts, and at Saint-Germain-des-Pres, seem not to know anything of the affairs that kept him in Paris or in its neighborhood. The approbation of the Order of Our Lady of Charity appears, then, to be the principal reason of his protracted delay. Shortly after the foregoing letter he wrote again to Mother Patin, on the same subject:

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear Mother:

The Divine Will be our guide in all things!

I received a letter last week from M. Boniface. He says your affairs are brightening perceptibly, thanks be to God; now is the time when we should redouble our promises to heaven; for a great battle has to be won yet. He wrote, also, that it is necessary to be warned that the *change*—that is to say, that the rates for money brought to Rome, has been increased five per cent, that instead of the rates being ten francs per hundred francs it is now fifteen per cent, on account of the great amount of money that was brought from Paris when the Ambassador and Cardinal Retz came. He said he would soon need about a hundred crowns; and his expenses have increased to ten crowns per month—his room costs three, without counting his laundry, firing, etc . . . . When he arrived in Rome he was obliged to spend one hundred crowns for clothes and underwear, for he left here in clothes that were badly in need of repairs, fearing no doubt that they would be soiled during the journey. He said everything wearable was very dear in Rome, and very light weight as to material, which obliged him to get serge clothes for the winter, but it would be necessary to get a cassock and a cloak for summer, which would cost at least twenty crowns, and that it would be impossible to maintain himself and buy clothing for less than sixty to eighty crowns per year; that it will cost him much more for writing and writing materials, and besides he will need something for presents to different persons; all this he said, so I would not be astonished when I would see his accounts.

This is what he has written to me, and he is a very sincere man . . . Hence, I pray you, my dear Mother, to find the money to send him. You know that in the month of September I gave him eight hundred livres, and it cost me eighty to bring them. As I had this money, and he had sent me word he needed it, I did not want to trouble you about it then. If I had it now I would give it as willingly as I did then, in the belief that you would give it to me, but I have it not. Get some, then, if you please, and send it to me soon, because the change will be increasing, and because I may not be much longer here. Unless you do so, my dear Mother, your affair will drag, and M. Boniface will be obliged to abandon it.

After so much trouble and expense it would be a pity to stop for want of funds at such a critical moment. We must not complain about money in transactions that belong directly to God; if you have not got it borrow it, but do not send less than from four to five hundred francs. It will cost much more for the Bulls. We will keep an account of it all. But see to it at once, I pray you, my dear Mother. I salute very cordially all our dear Sisters, and remain with my whole heart, my very dear Mother, Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

The Community said all the prayers demanded of them by the Blessed and by M. Boniface, and said them with the greatest fervor. Among other prayers they recited the Rosary before the miraculous statue, which occupies, even to this day, the place above the superioress' stall in the Nuns' choir. It was on one of these occasions that Sister M. of Saint John Ollvier, first Lay-Sister of the Institute, saw this statue of our Blessed Lady give her blessing.

It was extremely difficult to get money. The expenses of M. Boniface were not, however, exaggerated, for the Analist of the Charity said, that during the two years and a half that this affair lasted they expended 2,656 livres of the revenue of the Community. Mother Patin did not satisfy his demands; she took other counsel. But the tenacious instituor was not to be repulsed, and he felt a little hurt at the good Mother, and a few lively expressions indicative of that feeling escaped him. It is not wrong to see a few wordy battles between saints; they show what they had to overcome in order to arrive at sanctity. Besides, these letters prove the importance that the Blessed attached to the approbation of the Holy See. His disinterestedness is also clearly manifest, for he never demanded to be reimbursed for the sums that he had advanced, and the Act passed between the seminary and the convent was abandoned shortly before his death.

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear Mother:

The Divine Will be our guide in all things!

If I yielded to human considerations, your illness would afflict me sorely; but I do hope that our Lord will restore you to health. Seeing the adorable Will in this accident, too, I can say: *"Ita, Pater; quoniam sic fuit placitum ante te."* I conjure you, my good Mother, to take more care of your health, and submit your judgment to that of the doctor in all things that can contribute to your recovery.

But, my very dear Mother, what is that which you have written me regarding your affairs? Do you really want to give up the work that is already so far advanced, or do you think that things can be accomplished in Rome without money, and that M. Boniface can live and do the work confided to him without it? Is it not enough that he gives his time and takes the trouble to do it? I have assured you, and I assure you again, that it is an honest clergyman who has undertaken the business of the Order, through zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, as well as through pure charity, having plenty of means to live without that. Do you take me for a liar and a deceiver, and do you think that he is expending your money, or rather mine, for an evil purpose? Do you wish to pay him for all his time and trouble with such coin?

But you tell me your friends are astonished that a man can be so long in Rome in such an affair as that! Would to God that those intimate friends of yours would take the place of M. Boniface! They would soon see enough of Rome, and how the smallest transactions consume both time and patience, not to speak of money. Understand, my dear Mother, that if M. Boniface had hastened your affair, having had the last documents that were sent him, he would have lost everything; he would have been repulsed the second time; and if so, what do you think would happen?

Know, also, with your intimate friends, that it is one of the most difficult affairs that can be treated in Rome; for, first, they look upon it in Rome as a novel Institute, and consequently, as something that is most important. Secondly, they look upon it as an Institute composed of ladies of good morals who have to apply themselves to the direction of repenting sinners, which is a difficulty that the authorities in Rome cannot overlook or surmount; they believe that the first cannot live with the others without extreme peril to themselves.

To prove to you that no one as yet has been able to overcome this objection you must be aware that the Religious of the Refuge of Nancy, who are also at Avignon, at Dijon and in Rouen, have not yet obtained the Bulls of erection from our Holy Father, notwithstanding their efforts. And, remember, theirs is not so difficult a situation as ours, because their Community is composed of Penitents who, consequently, are not exposed to the same perils, because they have been received and approved at Avignon by the Pope's Legate. However, they have a man in Rome who has been working for their cause a much longer time than M. Boniface, and is a man very influential and highly creditable.

M. Boniface conferred with him, and this clergyman is stopping with him so as to find out what he can do for the Religious of Nancy, if your affair is settled. As to what I wrote to M. Boniface I am quite satisfied, for if the other affair, passed before yours, had been rejected, you could hope for nothing; if it had been received, and had been proposed with yours, they would oblige you to join those Religious and keep their rules. Judge, then, what sort of business yours is, and that to straighten out the tangle is not as easy as your intimate friends and the friends of the house have tried to make you believe.

There is a third reason which renders it more difficult, which is, that it has been already rejected. Tell all these things, if you please, to your intimate friends, and they'll quickly change their sentiments, or they will no longer be the intimate friends of your house.

Tell them, also, and believe it yourself, that it is not permitted to yield to judgments prejudicial to charity, especially that charity that we owe our neighbor, on a point of such consequence as that, at least without offending God mortally, and in this rash judgment they judge without the slightest foundation. I have already said to you, and I repeat it, M. Boniface had no other reason for going to Rome save your own business transaction. This is so true that I have not asked him to solicit for us even the smallest indulgence, no matter what it might be, so as not to divert him from that one thing necessary, and you nor nobody else can say he worked for any other purpose.

When all is over, if he should remain in Rome, even for one day, be sure it will not be at your expense, and he will render a good account of your money, and also of what I advanced to him in your name. But you must not expect that I will send him any more; if you do not send him any, be sure that when it shall be ended he will have to keep what is necessary for his return. I feel positive that he will not cease to pursue the business we entrusted to him; if he should, all the trouble that you have taken for the house of Our Lady of Charity would be wasted, for if we cannot get the Bull of Our Holy Father the Pope it cannot exist, because the first Religious that shall be tempted to give up her vocation will be easily persuaded that her Community was not approved by the Pope; hence, her vows are invalid; thus she will leave, and the whole house will be disrupted and fall to the ground;

and the fault will be imputed, before God and men, to good Mother Margaret Patin, who would not furnish the money necessary to secure the Bulls of approbation.

Oh, my dear Mother, the saints never spared money when it was necessary to procure the glory of God and the good of souls. You have done well to get the house of Vieille-Monnaie, which you have made commodious, although it was not absolutely necessary; would you spare it for a thing which ought to be the foundation of your Community, and without which it cannot exist? In the name of God, my very dear Mother, quit your mistrust and ill-founded suspicions, as unworthy of a saint such as Mother Patin is. Do not hearken to the whisperings of those intimate friends of whom you spoke, that you keep trust in him who has more esteem and affection for you, and more zeal for the good of your house than he can say.

It is he who is in the sacred love of the Most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary.

Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

This letter proved that to render his Institute a permanent one the holy founder looked upon money as very secondary. The importance that he attached to the approbation of Rome is shown in all its force, and the reason he alleged as his motive, especially if we consider the conditions of the seventeenth century, when all vows were solemn, and had their civil and religious results. The Venerated Mother Patin, counselled, without doubt, by the same persons, did not think it her duty to submit, so she wrote to him announcing the reception by the Community of his niece, Frances Herson. He replied with the same conviction:

My very dear and good Mother:

The Divine Will be our guide in all things!

I am infinitely grateful to our Lord and His holy Mother for your recovery, and I supplicate them to conserve and strengthen it daily, to give you health and holiness for their glory, and the sanctification of the dear house of their divine charity. I thank you, also, a thousand times, my very dear Mother, for the consolation you have given me in saying that you have received my little niece; but I am astonished that I have not heard from you sooner, or from some of the others concerning a thing which I desired for such a long time.

Now you have consoled me in this matter; but permit me to tell you, my very dear Mother, that you have grieved me very much by giving up the affair of Rome. I got a letter this week from M. Boniface in which he stated that things were in a pretty good condition. You told me lately that when you were sure of success in the matter you would send the money. Is it possible that Mother Patin, who is so virtuous and so reasonable, would make such a proposition? Would you treat M. Boniface, who made such a long journey, and took so much trouble out of pure charity for you, as a banker? And do you expect that he ought to employ for your services the money he has for personal wants? If he were your valet you could not oblige him to do so. Is it not enough that he promised to give you a faithful account of his expenses? You said I wrote to you that Divine Providence would provide. That's true; but do you pretend that because I made use of that expression I am obliged to furnish Providence or yourself the necessary money? Certainly, if I had it, I would willingly give it for that purpose. But I have given all I had and more, for I had to borrow it. Nevertheless, if you assure me that you will return it to me I will strive to raise some. But you must write this assurance to me, and send it by mail not later than Thursday or Friday; for, please God, I shall leave here soon; but I am not going to Caen immediately. I will be delayed a few days in Rouen and in Lisieux. If you allow this chance to pass by without listening to what I say what shall become of this affair? And what will M. Boniface do? I will be obliged to write to him that you do not wish to send him anything, so he must quit and return. And who shall be responsible to our Lord and His holy Mother for the destruction of their work, a work which is so important for their service and the salvation of souls? You do not need to cast the blame on any one else, my dear Mother, for I am certain it is all your own doing.

In the name of God, my good Mother, do not hesitate; you should pour out all your money for such an important matter as is the foundation of the House of Our Lady of Charity, for which you have worked and suffered so much up to the present, and without which it will be seriously compromised, if not entirely destroyed. If you have no money to give, send me an assurance that you will refund it, and I shall set about raising some at once.

I salute all our dear Sisters very cordially, and remain with my whole heart my very dear Mother,

Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

P. S. I recommend to your prayers and those of our dear Sisters the Bishop of Bayeux, who is to be consecrated on Sunday, March 19, 1662.

The name of this prelate was Monsignor de Nesmond, a man full of zeal, and who covered his diocese with charitable foundations. He was always kind and affable towards the Blessed Eudes and his foundations. His consecration was arranged for the date given in this letter, in the month of March. Mother Patin did not reply, because she could not down her prejudices against M. Boniface. We have reason to believe that he was truly worthy of the mission that he accepted, at least in what concerned the Order of Our Lady of Charity, and that he continued his difficult negotiations until he exhausted his own resources. It may be, too, that the Blessed Eudes sent him a little money, charging him to obtain some favors for him, which through excessive delicacy, he had not dared to do before, as is proved by his letters. He also found means to have him continue to work for the so-much-desired Bull of approbation. It is certain that M. Boniface did not leave Rome until six months later, towards the end of September. He obtained previously, but with much difficulty, a renewal of faculties for the missions for the Blessed Eudes and his brethren, but he committed one notorious fault in making the famous petition of which we have already spoken.

Besides the prejudice conceived in Rome against the fourth vow of the Sisters, the failure of M. Boniface may be very well explained on account of political reasons. There was much constraint between the Court of Rome and of Versailles. M. de Crequi, Ambassador to Louis XIV, did nothing to lessen it; he even seemed happy over the unforeseen incident of the Corsican Guard, so he precipitately quitted the Eternal City and retired to Tuscany on August 20, 1662. War was instantly declared between France and the Papal States, and Alexander VII had to accept the humiliating amends that the pride of Louis XIV demanded, secretly excited thereto by the Jansenists. In these unfavorable conditions M. Boniface could obtain nothing. These circumstances rendered much more imprudent the petition he made, as they explain the irritation of the King, when he presented it, and the disavowal of the Blessed.

It would be contrary to historical truth to say that this journey was useless. M. Boniface prepared the way, destroyed prejudice, and brought about and facilitated the success of the Abbes Georges and de Rance. This successful ending was partly shown in the previous correspondence of M. Boniface with the Blessed.

Sister M. of the Nativity Herson understood all that her holy uncle had to suffer in these circumstances. She wrote to him telling him to forget his troubles. The reply of the Blessed gives expression to his charitable sentiments:

My dear Niece and beloved Daughter;

It was with much joy and consolation that I read your letter, and I wish to say that I entirely forgive and forget all that has passed. Do not desire anything in this life but to serve faithfully our benign Savior and His Blessed Mother, and love them with all your heart.

I cordially salute the good Mother Superior and all my dear daughters. If they wish to make me happy they should receive back the poor orphan they sent away. *Vive Jesus et Marie!*

JOHN EUDES,
Priest of the Cong. of Jesus and Mary.

He did not ask again for money for Rome, but he interceded in a very touching manner for a poor orphan.

His forgetfulness was complete, for his correspondence with Mother Patin continued as formerly; never did he make the slightest allusion to what happened, nor did he show the faintest degree of coldness.

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CHAPTER XIV

FEAST OF THE HOLY HEART OF MARY—CONSENT TO THE CONDEMNATION OF THE JANSENISTS—DEATH OF M. DE LANGREI AND A PENITENT—REMARKABLE LETTER OF THE BLESSED EUDES ON THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION, AND ZEAL FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS

DURING these negotiations in Rome there happened certain things in the Community which have been conserved in our history. The Sisters of Our Lady of Charity, consecrated to the Holy Heart of Mary, honored her in their own particular way; but they were a long time before they were able to say the Office in public. The principal obstacle came directly from the confessor of the Community who had succeeded M. de le Pommeraye, in 1660. It appears that he had a leaning towards Jansensim. He was opposed to the celebration of this feast, even after the special approbation had been given to the monastery by Bishop de Nesmond, in 1673. One day, hearing them singing the first Vespers, he violently interrupted them, saying that it was a new devotion, and stated all the reasons dear to the sect. Unfortunately, the Community lived opposite him, and this sacred engagement had to be canceled until 1679.

His presence during all this time was a source of suffering; but it did not alter the purity of their faith. Mother Patin gave an authentic proof of this; she convoked the chapter, and had all the Sisters, even the novices, condemn the propositions of Jansenius by the following formula, very explicit in its brevity:

> I sincerely submit myself to the Constitution of Pope Innocent X, of May 31, 1653, according to its true sense, which has been determined by the Constitution of Our Holy Father Pope Alexander VII, of October 16, 1656. I acknowledge that I am obliged to obey his orders, to condemn what the Church condemns, and I condemn with heart and tongue the doctrine of the five propositions of Cornelius Jansenius,

contained in his book *"Augustinus,"* which those two Popes and the Bishops have condemned; that this doctrine is not that of Saint Augustine, as Jansenius has wrongfully declared, and that it is entirely contrary to the teachings of this great doctor.

FRANCES MARGARET PATIN, *Superioress.*
ANNE MARGARET FOI, *Assistant.*
MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION EUSTACHE DE TAILLEFER.
MARY OF THE NATIVITY HERSON.
MARY OF THE ANNUNCIATION GOUVILLE.
MARY OF THE PRESENTATION LECONTE.
MARY OF THE CONCEPTION LE LIEUPAUL.
MARY OF THE PURIFICATION TISON.
MARY OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT PIERRE.
MARY OF SAINT JULIEN LEBLOND.
MARY OF THE VISITATION GOLLEY.
MARY OF SAINT MAGDALEN MADUEL.
MARY OF THE TRINITY HEURTANT.
MARY OF THE RESURRECTION DES CHAMPS.
MARY OF THE INCARNATION HUE.
MARY OF SAINT COLOMBE D'HANNEBONT.
MARY OF THE ANGELS LOIR.
MARY OF SAINT JOHN OLIVIER.

This testimonial of faith offers us something of interest, as it makes known exactly the personnel of the monastery in the twentieth year of its existence. Soon after the Father of the family came to cull a tender flower: Sister des Champs, while yet a novice, died a victim of modesty and obedience. She had a severe fall, which occasioned a wound; gangrene set in, and when she acknowledged it it was too late. She obtained permission to make her vows on her death-bed, and died full of consolation, carrying her baptismal robe unsullied to the foot of the Throne; at least this is the testimony rendered her by those who knew her best.

The death of M. de Langrie was yet more sensibly felt by the Community. Full of merits, he rendered his beautiful soul to God on December 14, 1663. Out of respect for Sister Marie Desvallees he wished to be interred, like her, in the chapel of the Seminary of Coutances. His heart was left in the Charity. The glory and power of sanctity consists in strong friendships which it seems sometimes to engender. If the Blessed Eudes had a numerous array of enemies he had also devoted friends whom no unfortunate occurrence or any ill fortune could deprive him of, and among them we place in the first rank the good President de Langrie. To him belongs the protection of all his enterprises, to him he owed a vast amount of benefits. This history has already related several. Some years before his death he made a contract with the monastery, which is a very touching testimony of his humility and lively faith.

Considering, he said in this act, that the number and the enormity of his sins would have precipitated him into the eternal flames of hell, if he had been in the unhappy state in which he had lived until it had pleased God through His infinite goodness to convert him, he still would have been condemned for centuries to most horrible sufferings similar to those of hell (except as to duration) according to the course of Divine Justice, if it had not been tempered by some pious action which was capable of gaining the Divine mercy; that besides he would be excluded from hope of receiving any grace, if he had not previously in some way acquitted himself of his debts, and rendered to God at least some part of the goods He had given him, but which he had in part abused; that they belonged to those that possessed them, since seculars in particular are obliged to give an exact account of their goods to their Creator. To this effect he, the said Lord of Langrie, bequeathed to the Community the sum of 420 livres, which is to constitute an annuity with interest; it shall be applied for furnishing the bread and wine that shall be used at Holy Mass "to be changed into the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ" in the chapel of Our Lady of Charity. He then recommends to his heirs to acquit themselves of this sacred debt before any other, "and of delaying or even denying sepulture to his body," rather than that his soul would not be benefited as he hoped from the legacy he bequeathed to the present foundation.

This Christian idea regarding the duties imposed on the wealthy is very rare in our day; which is no less true concerning the necessity of combating their passions. Monsieur de Langrie was naturally inclined to anger; however, he took the greatest pains to overcome that defect. But, alas! nature overcome, entirely vanquished even, sometimes returns at full gallop. In this case chastisement was not delayed. One day M. de Langrie, carried away by a feeling of anger, threw a dish at the heels of a domestic who had committed some fault at which his master got enraged. The projectile had struck the individual as it was meant to do, but no sooner did the President come to his senses than he threw himself on his knees before his servant, and asked pardon for his act of violence. It was to correct him of this heat of passion that his confessor, Reverend P. Mannoury, ordered him to give forty sous to the poor every time that he committed this offense in company, and to ask pardon of the person offended.

Being a great admirer of the virtues of his faithful friend, the Blessed Eudes always recommended him to the prayers of his two Institutes. He himself celebrated the Holy Mass for his eternal repose for the space of a year.

He related the following extraordinary fact to his niece, and to M. de Langrie's son: During that year every time he ascended the altar for Mass he saw on the Epistle side a flame of fire with smoke issuing from it. But while he was saying the last or anniversary Mass the same flame appeared, but perfectly pure, no smoke could be seen. The flame arose toward heaven and disappeared from his eyes. At the same instant he thought he heard a voice thanking him for the prayers said for the soul of the deceased, and assuring him he was going to enjoy eternal happiness, which, he added, filled him with unutterable joy.

In 1661 the house of the Vieille-Monnaie was purchased; it was the same one that the Blessed institutor mentioned in one of his letters. It gave more space to the Community, and especially to the Penitents. The Religious, themselves, the Venerated Mother Patin at the head, did the principal work towards making it habitable.

The Annalist of the monastery says, that at that time the Penitents were quite numerous, and gave great consolation by the many conversions that took place among them. On certain days they had the devotion of reciting one thousand Hail Marys to obtain the grace of a happy death. One young person of a good family, who had been in the monastery fourteen months, had recited them, and her prayers were heard in a marvelous manner. From her entrance she had had continual qualms of conscience; day and night her conscience upbraided her, and nothing could give her any relief. Shortly after having performed this devotion she fell sick, received the Last Sacraments, and contrary to her late habit of unrest, she appeared perfectly tranquil. Sister M. of the Nativity, her mistress, went to see her in the evening, and again before retiring, and made the Acts of Preparation for Death with her, and told her to unite herself to the recitation of the salutation so dear to the holy founder, *Ave Maria, filia Dei Patris,* to ask our Blessed Mother to assist and protect her until the end. This duty of charity accomplished, Sister retired, but was just commencing to slumber when they came to tell her that the sick girl was asking for her, and to come as quickly as possible. She found her sitting up in bed, and a prey to intense fear. Amazed, terrified and quite beside herself the poor dying girl cried out: "Oh, Mother, I was about to be damned only for the Holy Virgin; go quickly and get my confessor."

He decided to respond to the call, persuaded of her good disposition. He spent more than two hours with her, and when he left he remarked that the Holy Virgin had performed a miracle for this poor dying child, and regretted that he was not able to remain longer with her in her great need.

She died a few days after in the holiest dispositions, which permitted the hope that God had received her in mercy. Hers was the first death among the Penitents or Converted in the monastery. She was buried in the cemetery of the Community. The Custom-Book has minutely regulated the ceremonies of burial of persons that die in the convent. The Sisters give them all the suffrages marked: have Mass celebrated for their repose, offer a Holy Communion and recite the Office of the Dead. This death, precious in the sight of God, consoled the Sisters and animated them to renewed courage in their charitable apostolate.

The reading of the lives of these first Religious shows the zeal with which they were devoured. The fervor of their prayers, the rigor of their mortifications for the salvation of those dear souls would be difficult to emulate.

It could not be otherwise, for in his visits their good Father incessantly repeated to them: "Oh, if at the hour of death a Religious of Our Lady of Charity would have no souls to present to God, what a pity!" He inculcated into the minds and souls of these his first daughters that their life was an apostolic one, that all their actions should be animated with zeal. These ardent words, supported by so many heroic examples, filled all hearts, and urged them on to the extreme limits of sacrifice and devotedness.

It was in this spirit that they bore the dearth of that year. Today, with facilities of travel and other means of communication, provisions arrive in a few days from one part of the globe to the other, so it is difficult to conceive the terrible effects of those frequent famines. That year the poverty of the Sisters reduced them to live on green vegetables from their little garden, and frequently from those of some charitable neighbors, who threw some over the wall. Thirty or forty years later the old Sisters used to recount all these details with childlike pathos, especially how they regaled themselves on feast days with a kind of deer-stew, which seemed to them an exquisite dish so largely did God compensate them for their sacrifices, and so well did He console them in their penury. Divine Providence seemed, also, to multiply their provision of grain, for at the end of the year they were able to sell some to get money enough to buy flour, and provide other indispensable articles of diet.

The following long and truly beautiful letter came to them about that time. The founder addressed it to them in order to reanimate their courage, and augment their devotion to the admirable Mother, and increase in them great zeal for the salvation of souls. All his doctrine on that principal end is nobly developed, and sustained by comparisons and examples very appropriate to this end. It merits to be read and meditated on with care:

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear Sisters and well-beloved Daughters in the love of the Most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary; the grace, peace and love of this same Jesus be with you forever!

Not being able to avail myself of the consolation of speaking with you by word of mouth I must speak to you by pen, inviting and exhorting you to prepare yourselves well for the glorious feast of the Assumption of our admirable Mother. It is her greatest feast; it is the day of her greatness and her triumphs. It is the day that put an end to her labors and sufferings and on which she commenced her reign of eternal felicity. It is the day on which she was placed upon her throne of glory and of majesty so befitting the dignity of the Mother of God. It was on this day that she was able to say to her Son, and in her dependence on Him: "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth." It was on this day that she was declared Sovereign, that the Most Holy Trinity gave her power over heaven and earth and all things.

On account of this all creatures are obliged to render her respect and homage as to their Queen and Sovereign Lady, to whom they belong, and on whom they shall eternally depend. But you have very particular obligations, very dear Sisters, to honor in every way possible this great Princess to whom you belong, not only in quality of servants and of slaves, like the greater part of Christians in her empire of the universe, but in quality of daughters, and of daughters of her Heart, and who are very near and dear to her. Dispose yourselves, then, to give her what you owe her on this great feast.

To this effect you must render her four duties before she leaves this earth to go to heaven. If a great queen were to visit you, before she left your presence what would you do? You would certainly do these four things:

1. You would thank her for the favor she had done you.

2. You would make excuses and ask pardon that you had not received her with all the pomp which her high rank merited.

3. You would make promises of service, respect and obedience.

4. If you knew that she desired something of you, such as a book of devotion, some image, a chaplet or other similar thing, you would present it to her with all the affection you would be capable of.

This is also what you ought to do in regard to the Queen of Heaven before she leaves this earth. You owe her four duties:

1. Thank her for all that she has done and suffered here below in co-operating with her Son in the work of our salvation and sanctification.

2. Ask pardon and make her honorable amends for all the injuries, offenses and outrages that she has received on our account; and for reparation and satisfaction offer her the most amiable Heart of her Son, so full of love for her, with all the honor, the glory and the praises that have been, are now and shall be rendered her in heaven and on earth.

3. Tell her that you desire to serve, honor, love, obey and imitate her virtues, and excite every one to do the same, as far as you can.

4. Pay attention to what she requires you to do, so that you can make it as presentable and as agreeable as possible, and with it, and above all do not forget, to offer her your heart.

After that you must ask your good Mother to give you her blessing, which she will do, without a doubt, if you have a firm desire of living as her good daughters—that is to say, of rendering yourselves like her as much as it will be possible to you, by a careful imitation of her holiness.

Now, this is what you have to do on the eve of the feast. For the day you ought to do five things:

1. Give thanks to the Most Holy Trinity, and invite all the angels, the saints and all creatures to give thanks with you for all the favors that they have bestowed upon your Holy Mother in her resplendent life, and in her death, in her glorious assumption, and since she is in heaven, and because she shall be there for all eternity.

2. Rejoice with her for all the glory and felicity she possesses and shall possess eternally in heaven.

3. Kneel and salute, look up and honor her at the moment she is placed upon her throne at the right hand of her Son, and hailed as Lady, Sovereign and Empress of the whole universe; render her homage in the name of all creatures, offer her your tokens of respect and submission, offer her your service, dependence and the obedience that you owe her, and unite yourselves to all the praises that can be rendered her by all the inhabitants and by the King of Heaven, Himself.

4. Give her your heart, your mind, your will, your person, and beg her to detach you from the earth, and that she take you with her to her beautiful Heaven, that she may impress in you an image of the new life that she has entered upon, which is holy and celestial; that she unite and associate you to the love, the glory, to the adorations and praises that she renders and shall render the Most Holy Trinity forever and ever.

5. Seek means to increase her accidental joy and glory; here are four excellent means:

The first, is to engrave on your heart a strong resolution and a constant intention of seeking in all your actions nothing but the glory of her Son and the accomplishment of His most adorable Will.

Secondly, to be very exact and faithful in the obedience you owe to your good Mother Superior, whom you ought to regard as her who takes the place and who represents to you the person of the most Holy Virgin, your true Mother and first Superior; as also your Rules and Constitutions.

Thirdly, to love and cherish each other, with a love that is sincere, simple, tender and cordial, that will banish from your thoughts, words and actions anything to the contrary, and that you repair promptly and efficaciously the least faults that you may commit against mutual charity.

Fourthly, is to have a noble and heroic desire and will to attain the end of your holy Institute, which urges you to work by your prayers, by your example, by your instructions, and in every way that is laid down to you by holy obedience, for the salvation of erring souls whom Divine Providence may send you.

This, my dear Sisters, is the most wholesome, the most powerful and the most select means for you to increase the glory, the joys and even the domain of our great Queen, for the conversion of one soul gives her more joy than all the other good works that can be done in the world, and in receiving such a soul back into her arms she is obtaining more joy than all the inhabitants of heaven could give her; and to aid and extricate a soul from the tyranny of Satan, to draw that soul back to her empire, is bestowing a greater service on her than to confer a terrestrial kingdom. It is this that brings most joy to her Heart, and what is most agreeable to her: this, then, is the means for you to become daughters of her Heart, and doing this you shall be associated with her while following the royal road of your holy vocation.

Yes, my dear Sisters, you have in a manner the same vocation as the Mother of God. For as God chose to form His Son in her, and through her in the hearts of the faithful, He called you to this holy Community where you are, to make His Son live in you, and to raise, through you, the souls of poor Penitents that were dead in sin. God sent her on this earth and made her the Mother of His Son, and gave her all the graces and qualifications that she possessed in favor of poor sinners, without whom she would not be what she is, and He has placed you in His holy house, and given you many graces for this same end. Oh, my dear Sisters, how holy is your vocation! Oh, how advantageous is your position! Oh, what goodness God showed you in having called you to an Institute truly apostolic! Oh, how great would be your ingratitude if you did not recognize your obligation to His Divine Majesty!

But remember that this employment greatly displeases the malignant spirit, and that there are no persons he hates more than those working for the salvation of souls. He will never fail to tempt you to abandon your vocation. He will represent to you the trials and difficulties that you must suffer; but remember, my very dear Sisters, that there is no condition in this world exempt from pain and labor, and that if you do not suffer with Jesus, you cannot reign with Him; hence, there is nothing you ought to fear more than to be without crosses. Cast your eyes on the crucifix and see what He suffered for the salvation of souls. Is it reasonable that you be associated with Him in His great work for which He came into this world, which is to save sinners, giving His Blood drop by drop for them, and be not ready to do everything? Alas! where would would you be now if the fear that He had of those tortures, which was so violent as to make Him sweat blood, had hindered Him from dying for your salvation? Consider, also, the sorrows, the tears and anguish which the Blessed Virgin had to pass, as through a sea, to co-operate with her Son in the redemption of lost souls.

Read the life of Saint Catherine, and you will see the terrible torments she had to suffer for the relief of the souls in Purgatory; and know that to help to bring a soul from the night of mortal sin, even if she would not persevere, is more necessary than to deliver all the souls out of Purgatory. Place before the eyes of your mind those holy nuns who quitted their country, crossed the seas, and located among the Canadians, where they toiled day after day in the midst of a thousand dangers to gain some souls to God.

I know a person of your own sex, a weak woman, timid and fragile like yourselves, who asked God during several years, and with incredible ardor, to make her suffer for a time a part of the awful pains of hell, in order to preserve some wicked souls from eternal flames, and God saw fit to hear her prayer, sending her such incredible torments that no tongue or pen could express them, and she lived forty years in these frightful torments.

After that, my very dear Sisters, ought we not die of confusion at sight of our weakness and tepdity; the least difficulty casts us down, the least pain discourages us; we are unable to overcome the smallest temptation; flies are as big as elephants; we are saddened at what ought to rejoice us, and tremble with fear at every sound. We only wish to enjoy the advantages of holy religion, but do not want to bear the crosses incidental to this life; we imagine that devotion consists in leading an idle useless life. Every devotion that has not for its object self-renunciation in regard to one's own will and one's own satisfaction, and carrying one's cross after Jesus up to Mount Calvary, walking in His footsteps, seeking the weary and sin-laden, is but a mere illusion and deception.

Do you not know, my very dear Sisters, that the narrow path which leads to Heaven is the way of the Cross, than which there is no other way, and that the true and solid virtues needed to become agreeable to God are acuqired only by much suffering, sweat, mortification and the violence that we do ourselves? Do you not understand when the Lord says to us that the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and that only those who strive after it with a holy violence will bear it away, and that He Himself passed through an infinity of tribulations before He entered into His glory that belonged to Him by so many titles?

How shall you be of the number of His members and His spouses if you do not be conformed to Him? Do you want a new Gospel for yourself, or do you desire that God should send another Messiah—a Messiah of sugar and roses? Do you want to go to Paradise by another way than that by which the Mother of God and all the saints have gone, or do you want to go alone, and leave your poor sisters going the broad road to hell, because you are so delicate that you fear the trouble of taking them by the hand and leading them aright?

You say, perhaps, that they walk by a way so foul that you fear to soil yourself in drawing them away from it; the devil is mighty crafty in sending you that temptation, which is all the more dangerous as it has such a fair complexion, but I say to you, my dear daughters, that it is impossible for our Lord to allow those to fall who for His love aid others to rise from such a life of sin as we are treating of. *Purity can never be sullied when it is, seemingly, placed in jeopardy, through pure charity;* no more than the rays of the sun can be stained by the mud on which its beams penetrate. Reject, then, those vain fears and have confidence in Him Who has called you to this divine employment; if you diffide in yourselves, and rely on Him, He will never allow you to fall.

In fine, my very dear daughters, if you desire to increase the joy and glory of our worthy Princess be faithful to her Son in your vocation, close your ears to the vile whispers of the serpent, be not daughters of Eve who listened and was enticed, but be daughters of Mary who crushed his head beneath her feet. I suplicate her with my whole heart to enable you to crush and humble yourselves, and render yourselves worthy of being the veritable daughters of her Immaculate Heart, filled with love and zeal for the salvation of souls who have cost her Son Jesus every drop of His precious Blood. It is in that sacred furnace of love of the most amiable Heart of the Son and of the Mother that I am and shall always be, my very dear Sisters and beloved daughters,

Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES,

Missionary-Priest of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

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CHAPTER XV

APPROBATION OF THE ORDER AND BULLS OF ALEXANDER VII

THE Blessed John Eudes did not lose sight of the approbation of the Order of which he was the founder. When good relations were reestablished between the Court of Rome and that of Versailles, he learned that his friend M. Georges, Abbe of Val-Richer, of the Order of Citeaux, was going to the Eternal City, as deputy with the Abbe de Rance, of la Trappe, to support the reform that both had established in their abbeys. It was a very favorable occasion: the zealous institutor seized hold of it. He gave all necessary information to the Abbe Georges regarding the end he was striving after for the Order of Our Lady of Charity, and the means he had employed to attain it; he acquainted him with the negotiations entered into at Rome and the objections that were raised, as well as the replies that had been made; he wished especially to persuade the Cardinals of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars of the importance of the new foundation and the immense good it would accomplish in the Church.

The Abbot of Val-Richer accepted this mission with alacrity, on account of his ardent zeal for the salvation of souls and of his friendship for the founder; he promised to entice the Abbot of la Trappe to join his good offices with his own. This important affair could not have fallen into better hands. The Abbe de Rance carried to Rome the letters of recommendation of the Queen-Mother and of the King, and, of course, his reputation preceded him. The Abbes arrived at the tomb of the Apostles on November 16, 1664. They presently began their appointed tasks, the principal object of their journey; contenting themselves with gaining indirect information concerning the approbation of the Order of Our Lady of Charity.

The following year Cardinal de Retz went to Rome, and in accordance with him he pursued the work on hand with the greatest activity and the best results. History may relate the wrongs committed by this intriguing prelate; but here we can only give him a tribute of our heartiest gratitude, as we owe him in the sight of God and men the favor of having obtained for us the long-wished-for approbation.

He was personally known to His Holiness Alexander VII. During the conclave preceding the election he used all his influence for the success of the election. Besides, this Cardinal knew and esteemed the Blessed Eudes very much. He was most willing to accommodate the two Abbots regarding the mission they were charged with by the Blessed, and promised to have an understanding with his Holiness. He did as he promised, and Alexander VII, who had resolved not to do anything for the Reform of Citeaux, expressed pleasure and consolation in acceding to the question that had been broached concerning the approbation of Our Lady of Charity. The Pope then named a special commission to study the question and present him with a complete report.

During these negotiations the Community redoubled their prayers and mortifications. To obtain the favor required the Religious agreed that: 1. Every day each one would make a retreat of twenty-four hours; 2, that this retreatant would fast and take the discipline that day; 3, that every day all the Sisters would make a procession, at which the Sister who was on retreat would assist barefoot, carrying a statue of Saint Joseph; 4, that they would recite in choir, for one year, the Office of the Immaculate Conception. This last practice of devotion has been used several times in the Order, and nearly always with the happiest results. This idea was inspired by the founder, who was the first to celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception with an octave.

These devotions had been commenced for some time, when one day in chapter the venerated Mother Patin told the Sisters that she had a presentiment that the Bulls of confirmation would be granted before the end of the year, and begged them to do more violence to Heaven; in fact, to besiege it with prayers. These words seemed to carry with them the weight of a prophecy, and filled the Sisters with an unbounded feeling of confidence, and wonderfully stimulated their fervor.

Truly the hour of Divine Providence had arrived. The Cardinals designated by the Pope assembled, and Cardinal de Retz hastened to assist at this reunion. All previous memorandums were presented and studied. The objection taken from the danger the Religious would be in while directing and having daily communiaction with persons often very corrupt at heart was disposed of, as the Cardinal replied by giving a detailed account of the wise precautions taken; he mentioned the good already accomplished, and insisted much on the difference of climates and temperaments. Moreover, the Abbots of la Trappe and of Val-Richer, by visits adroitly made, being, of course, occupied in the reform of their Order, had succeeded in beating down some of the prejudice. The Cardinals decided to keep a testimonial of Cardinal de Retz and the two Abbots, and then stated that the referendum was very favorable. After having listened to the statement, the Holy Father gave the Bull of erection to the Order under the Rule of Saint Augustine. It was dated January 2, 1666.

ALEXANDER VII, POPE

FOR A PERPETUAL MEMORIAL OF THIS ACT

Charged with the government of the Church by the Divine Bounty, and without any merit on Our part, we seek all that is proper to favor and strengthen and happily develop the monasteries and other regular places belonging to the devout sex, especially where they are erected for the salvation of souls, for the growth of religion and the beauty of divine worship.

With the paternal charity of our pastoral charge, after having maturely studied the diversity of places and persons, we intervene in order to regulate what we think useful in the Lord. The Religious of the House of the Refuge of the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity, of the city of Caen, diocese of Bayeux, have made known to us lately—that is to say, in the year one thousand six hundred and fifty-two, that the House of Refuge was constructed and erected by the alms of the faithful, in the city of Caen, province of Normandy; with the consent of the late most Christian King of France, Louis XIII, of happy memory; with the permission and approbation of the Bishop of Bayeux, then existent, for the Religious of Our Lady of Charity, following the Rule of Saint Augustine, to receive and instruct women who have led a bad life, and who are desirous of being converted; and fearing that those Religious might abandon their pious design, the said Bishop prudently ordained that to the three ordinary vows they should add a fourth simple vow, to receive and instruct the said Penitents; and he asked, also, that they should request the Holy Apostolic See for the approbation of their Institute with these four vows to be made solemn vows. As the same statement added that this House of the Refuge was to provide all that was necessary for the needs of a monastery—church with a bell, cloister, courts, cells, refectory, dormitory, cemetery, gardens and other dependencies useful for their dwelling; that it has a convenient enclosure, and that near it, yet entirely separate and distinct, there be a house for the penitent women who shall be admitted; besides, these pious ladies request Us by an humble petition to grant them all other favors necessary to the institution of this monastery; to render it similar to other congregations of virgins, living under the Rule of Saint Augustine, in the different cities of the kingdom of France, and approved (as they assure us) by the said See; and to approve and confirm the Rule of this monastery and the Constitutions prescribed those Religious by the Ordinary of Bayeux, with perpetual erection and institution of same monastery into a conventual priory, under the name of Priory of the Refuge of Our Lady of Charity, with the Rule of Saint Augustine, in which priory women of good character, virgins or widows, desirous of embracing this Institute, and having finished their twentieth year, after two years of probation or novitiate, may pronounce, besides the three ordinary vows, a fourth vow to apply themselves to the conversion, reception and instruction of female penitents:

Wherefore, being desirous of showing special favor to the above-mentioned exponents, and absolving them by these presents, and holding them as absolved, each and every one of them, from all ecclesiastical sentences, censures and penalties of excommunication, suspension and interdict and any others, whatsoever, whether of the Law or of men, on whatever occasion or from whatever cause, if they have incurred any; by the advice of our Venerable Brethren the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, and the members of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars; and having learned from these same Cardinals the relation of Our dear son, the Nuncio of said Holy See, with our dear son in Jesus Christ, Louis, the most Christian King of France; and having seen the attestation of our Venerable Brother the Bishop of Bayeux, We approve and confirm with benevolence, by tenor of these present letters, the said monastery or priory of the exponents, erected as aforesaid with the rule and institution designated above; by our Apostolic authority, and by these presents, we approve and confirm this same monastery or priory, and its prioress and those Religious, present and future, as well as to the females received, or who shall be received, and to those that shall be attached to the service of this same monastery or priory; that they may freely and licitly use, profit and enjoy each and all of the privileges, exemptions, liberties, immunities, powers and indults, and all and singular favors spiritual and temporal, granted up to the present in any manner, or that shall be granted in the future, to the prioress, Religious, penitent women and other persons however attached, and all other congregations and monasteries of Religious of the same Institute erected in the different places, and in the neighboring provinces, and with perfect equality, as if it were granted to themselves principally.

We ordain that these present letters be and shall always remain firm, valid and efficacious, and that they have and obtain their entire effect; and be inviolably obesrved by all and singular who are concerned, and shall in future be concerned; and that all, judges ordinary or delegated, even the Auditors of Causes of the Apostolic Palace, so judge and define; and that whatever may be done or attempted to the contrary in these matters, knowingly or ignorantly, by any authority whatsoever, be held void and of no effect; notwithstanding our precept and that of our Apostolic Chancellor of not allowing any such indulgence; notwithstanding the constitutions and general or special ordinances rendered by the councils or apostolic synods, universal or provincial, or by any other; notwithstanding the statutes and usages, privileges, indults and letters Apostolic granted, confirmed and conceded to the aforesaid effect, We condescend specially and expressly to all and singular of these tenors before being regarded as fully and sufficiently designated here, wishing that they remain in force, notwithstanding all things to the contrary.

Given at Rome at Saint Mary Major, under the seal of the Fisherman's ring, this second day of January MDCLXVI (1666).

And of our Pontificate the Eleventh Year.

S. UGOLINUS.

Sealed with red wax.

This Bull is very eulogistic. The favors granted are very extended. It would be very interesting for the entire Order of Our Lady of Charity that a special work would make the whole extent of it exactly known, as well as the number of indulgences and privileges similar to those granted to the other monasteries under the Rule of Saint Augustine.

The Annals of Our Lady of Charity show that the amount of the expenses for all the work undertaken in Rome amounted to the sum of 3256 livres; the Bull was estimated to have been more than six hundred livres. Few communities have expended less to attain that important result. Those who contributed the most in obtaining it, the Abbes of la Trappe and of Val-Richer, remained much longer in Rome than M. Boniface, and necessarily expended a considerable more sum, and less happy were the results for them than for Our Lady of Charity, for they did not get what they desired so much.

However, it was not a question of a new foundation for them, merely a simple reform.

We do not know if the Order of Our Lady of Charity could have continued to exist if the Blessed founder had not fought so perserveringly to obtain the approbation. Ancient memories make us doubt it very much. It is very certain that its trials would have proved too long and too dangerous for its stability. It is none the less certain that even up to the present day the benefits of this approbation continue to be felt. Our Lady rf Charity is an Order like the Carmel, and the Visitation. The misfortunes of the times have removed from them the permission to make solemn vows, but at least they are perpetual from the day they are pronounced. In the most of the modern congregations the Church, less confident in the constancy of the human mind, does not permit any vows to be made other than temporary, at least for a number of years, after which they can make simple perpetual vows.

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CHAPTER XVI

JOY OF THE SISTERS AND THE BLESSED AT THE NEWS OF THE OBTAINING OF THE PAPAL BULLS—SOLEMN RENOVATION OF VOWS

Reverend Mother Patin only received the happy news of the expediting of the Bulls shortly before Lent. Although sick and in the infirmary at the time, she got up, and assembling the Community in the choir she herself entoned the *Te Deum.* Moreover, she made a vow to continue for another year the recitation of the Office of the Immaculate Conception. She then hastened to impart the good news to the Blessed Father Eudes. He was then in Paris, where he went after his great mission of three months at Saint Pierre of Caen. His reply was but an expression of his happiness:

My very dear Mother:

I thank you with my whole heart for the good news that you sent me; my joy is too great for words. Infinite thanks be forever rendered to the Most Holy Trinity! Infinite thanks to our most adorable Jesus! Eternal thanks to His most holy Mother, who is ours also! Immortal thanks to all the angels, and to all the saints, especially to Saint Francis de Sales! Benediction and tenfold benediction on every one who has contributed in making this a great success!

We rejoice with you in our Lord, my very dear Mother; we rejoice with you, my very dear Sisters, and may these heavenly favors animate us to love ardently and to serve faithfully our most sweet Jesus, and our most amiable Mother by the practice of solid virtues, especially humility, obedience, charity, and more especially of zeal for poor wandering souls. It is thus you ought to show your appreciation of this great gift, and love evermore Him who has sacrificed Himself for sinners, and prove the desire you have to please our most charitable Mother.

I do not doubt but that you have sung our grand *Alleluia!* Oh, I have a great wish to sing it with you, my very dear Mother and my very dear Sisters. You ought to carry the sacred relic* of the holy martyrs, companions of Saint Denis, that I got for you from Madame de Montmartre. For I did not forget, my very dear Sisters, although it may have seemed to you that I did forget you entirely, not having any news of you since I left Caen. I assure you that I present you every day to God, all in general, and each one in particular, when I am at the holy altar. I then call you all my poor sheep and my dear daughters whom I sacrifice with our adorable Host, to the glory and praise of the Most Holy Trinity, and do several other things for you that it would be too tedious to commit to paper.

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*The Monastery of Caen possesses yet in its archives three authentic relics, signed by Madame de Lorraine, abbess of Montmartre. The first is dated October 8, 1661; the second August 30, 1665. These relics appear to have been given for the Seminaries of Caen and Lisieux. Perhaps the Blessed gave them in preference

I pray you, my very dear Mother, to let all our dear Sisters read this letter or read it to them, and do not forget in your prayers one who is in truth in the Most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary. My very dear Mother,

Ever yours,
JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

According to the Annals of Our Lady of Charity this letter must have been written October 11, 1665. The Bulls had been granted, but not yet delivered. According to usage the Bulls were sent from Rome to the Bishop of the diocese. Bishop de Nesmond did not receive them until after Easter. Shortly after he met a Touriere Sister, and said to her with a joyous smile and in a joyful tone while he put his hand in his pocket: "I have right here something that will rejoice your Community. Tell your good Mother Superior that I have the Bulls, and that I will bring them over very soon." He brought them over the same afternoon. The Religious were all assembled at the grate of the choir, and after having told them to thank God for this great favor the Bishop made them see the excellence of the Bull, and the advantages that the Institute would derive from its possession.

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to the Charity. No house is designated in the third, which was dated May 22, 1667. With these authentics is an autograph of the Blessed, unknown until the present, and which we now reproduce out of respect for his memory, and also on account of the importance that the Church of the National Vow has given to the Mount of Martyrs. The reader may here remark the confession of an apparition of the holy Virgin to him to give the name of the saints. It is the most certain proof that we have an indisputable knowledge of the ineffable communications of Mary with her devout servant.

In the year 1562 the Calvinists took up arms and entered by force into the Church of Saint Medard, in the suburb of Saint Mark of Paris, and broke the statues, profaned the altars, and threw the Most Holy Sacrament beneath their feet. Afterwards they entered triumphantly into the city in the order of battle, as they wanted to destroy all the churches; the Religious of Montmartre were so terrified, in the fear they had that the furious heretics would exercise the same rage on their church and on the holy relics that were there, not only of the holy Martyrs who shed their blood on that same mountain, but also of several other saints that had been brought to them from Rome and other places, that they gathered all the relics with the greatest haste, and throwing them into barrels they hid them altogether and confusedly in one secret place, where they were left a long time, and when they were sought for the names and writing on the relics were so defaced that they could not make out to which saint any one belonged; hence, they were called collectively **The Relics of the Holy Martyrs** of Montmartre, of which Mme. de Lorraine gave five for our House of Caen, for Coutances, Rouen, and for Lisieux, as well as for the House of Our Lady of Charity according to the subjoined attesta-

"Until now," continued he, "you were attached to the religious life only by simple vows, from which you could be easily dispensed for good reasons; but if you renew them, they will become solemn and irrevocable. Reflect well, during the time that remains, on the grave decision that you are to make. Do it freely, without yielding to fear or human respect."

To give due time for reflection, his Lordship settled that the ceremony of the new profession would take place on the feast of the Ascension, and ordered Mother Patin to see that all those about to take part in the ceremony go on retreat. All the professed, to the number of sixteen, commenced their retreat with an inexpressible joy. Two among them who had not yet accomplished their twentieth year, as exacted by the wording of the Bull, were charged with all the employments in conjunction with the novices, so that nothing would disturb the Sisters who were on retreat. At the end of these exercises M. Le Grand, Cure of Saint Julien and superior of the Community, examined the Religious, as ordered by Canon Law; this is also exacted in case of simple novices. The Sisters left the enclosure one after another, and this superior spared nothing to convince himself that they were entirely free; he even offered to dispense them from their simple vows. This was going a little too far. Other reasons than the simple renovation of vows were needed before they could have been legitimately dispensed; and even then, according to the advice of the Doctors of the Sorbonne, they would have to be supported by grave authorities, for the three ordinary vows were already solemn. This trial only serves to show the firm-

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tion: "But after several prayers were said for this intention, the Blessed Virgin had the goodness to declare to us the accident that happened to these holy relics in the aforesaid manner: And made known to us that the relic that is in Coutances, with its certificate, belongs to Saint Valentine, martyr; not the Saint Valentine whose feast is kept on February 14th, but one of those of whom mention is made in the Roman Martyrology, on October 22d, which has the number of 4966.

"That the largest of the four others that are in the House of Caen, and one of which is a bone of an arm or a thigh bone, belongs to Saint Sebastian, martyr; that the second, which is also in that house, is that of Saint Alexis; that these two were brought from Rome by a holy man of Saint Cleu, named James Alain, who received them from Pope Marcel in the year 1555, to bring to Montmartre; the third, which is yet in that house, is of Saint Louis, King of France; and the fourth, which I have given to the House of Our Lady of Charity, is that of Saint Satyr, martyr, who suffered martyrdom on January 12th, according to the Roman Martyrology.

"Immortal thanks be rendered you, O Queen of all Saints, for this signal favor that you have been pleased to bestow upon us.

"Given in Caen, this 21st day of September, 1666.

"JOHN EUDES."

"We must remark that the translation, of which there is mention made in this attestation of Madame de Montmartre, was made in the year 1527. The relics of Saint Sebastian and of Saint Alexis were not yet at Montmartre, they having been brought since, in the year 1555; they were hidden and confused with the others until the year 1562, when they were found in the manner above mentioned.

"JOHN EUDES."

ness of those first Sisters; all demanded with earnestness the grace of consecrating themselves irrevocably to God, very resolved to live and die in their holy vocation.

That examen was made on May 31st. On June 2d, the Bishop of Bayeux gave in these terms the Act that recognized the Bull of the Holy See, and ordered its application:

Francis de Nesmond, Bishop of Bayeux, by the grace of God and of the Apostolic See, to all whom it may concern, salvation in the Lord:

Our pastoral office obliges us to make known to you in this apostolic letter for our well-beloved daughters in Jesus Christ, the Religious, called of the House of the Refuge of Our Lady of Charity, of Caen City, in our diocese, that they have obtained from our Holy Father the Pope, Alexander VII, the Bull of erection and confirmation of their Institute, and for the solemnizing of the fourth vow which they will make in said monastery, given at Rome at Saint-Mary Major, under the seal of the Fisherman's ring, the second day of January of the present year, the eleventh year of the Pontificate of our said Holy Father, signed UGOLINUS; the aforesaid Religious demanded of us in all humility that we receive the said apostolic letters, and that it be our good pleasure to admit, approve and confirm their said Institute, which has been commenced and erected under our permission and that of our predecessors.

We, said Bishop, knowing that the said letters were truly and duly expedited from the Court of Rome, and having a truly paternal desire for the good and advancement of the said Religious, have also admitted, approved, authorized, and confirmed their Institute and erection, according to the form and tenor of the said letters Apostolic; and we shall admit, approve, authorize and confirm by these presents those ends: that ladies of good morals, girls and widows, having attained the age of twenty years, and after having made two years' novitiate, will be allowed to make the three ordinary vows, and a fourth vow to receive and instruct women of dissolute life who may wish to do penance in the said monastery, under the Rule of Saint Augustine and the Constitutions that we have ourselves prescribed for them; living thus in perpetuity, with an Institute and perpetual erection of said monastery, erected as a conventual priory, under the supervision of the Prioress of the Refuge of Our Lady of Charity, as is amply stated in the said Apostolic letters; however, the said Religious be kept and be obliged to remain under our authority, guidance and direction for all time; this being also understood for our successors.

In witness whereof, we have given them these presents, signed by our hand, and commanded our secretary to sign them and place our seal thereon.

Given at Caen, in our Episcopal Palace, the year of our Lord, one thousand six hundred and sixty-six, the second day of the month of June.

The next day, feast of the Ascension, his Lordship went to the chapel, accompanied by his clergy. A great number of the most distinguished people of the city, as well as all the benefactors of the house, were gathered there. At the end of the Mass, celebrated by the prelate, the Blessed John Eudes, who this time, was allowed to join in the general festivity that meant so much to his daughters, mounted the pulpit, and took for the text of his sermon these words of Saint Mark, which were found in the Gospel of the day: *"Super aegros manus imponont, et bene habebunt."* "They shall place their hands on the sick and they shall be cured." After having saluted the Bishop, as is usual, he addressed the Sisters nearly in these terms:

It is to you, my very dear Sisters, that I now speak: Oh, you, the daughters of the Holy Heart of the Mother of beautiful love, this is the day so long expected, on which you are to renew our holy vows! Advance, and pronounce them with a large heart, *Corde Magno et animo volenti.* You are going to make the vows of poverty, of chastity and of obedience like other Religious; but you are to be far more distinguished than them by the fourth vow, which you make to labor for the salvation of souls redeemed by the Precious Blood of the Son of God. Remember, my very dear Sisters, that it is only for this that you have been founded,that the city has received you only on this condition, and that at the hour of death God shall demand of you a strict account of this employment. Oh, what a cold reception will the Religious of Our Lady of Charity receive on that accounting day who has no souls to present to her Judge! It is for you, my dear Sisters, to think of this, and firmly believe that you are indispensably obliged to do all that lies in your power, to give every moment to that great work, your prayers, and your labors, but especially the example of a holy life, to draw to your Divine Spouse the souls that He has redeemed by His most Precious Blood. This is your obligation; think of it continuously. Ah, if you were so unhappy as not to perform what you are making vows to do I beg that from this moment the Celestial Father will chastise you so severely, that by this means you may reenter all the sooner into your first fervor for this your divine and only employment.

After this sermon, the Bishop entoned the *Veni Creator;* then the Religious came one by one to pronounce their vows, as it is practiced today. After the ceremony the new professed in a burst of joyous thanksgiving sang the Psalm *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes* with five *Alleluias* between each verse. Their singing at that moment seemed so touching in its sweetness that the spectators were moved to tears. The holy institutor could not contain his emotion, but with a heart filled to overflowing with consolation he spoke again, testifying his profound gratitude to all the benefactors of the house, and added that his wishes being accomplished he was ready to die whenever God willed, since he had seen with his eyes the Order of Our Lady of Charity so solidly established in the Church.

The solemnity of this ceremony raised another tempest, but it was to be the last. The sheriffs had their suspicions, and did not wish to remember the authorization given by their predecessors, so they went in a body to the grates of the monastery, and declared in the name of the King that the professed Religious and the novices had to leave within twenty-four hours.

Without being troubled or showing any traces of agitation Mother Patin showed them the letters patent of the King, those of institution of Bishop Mole, and the authentic consent of the city. After having read these documents and finding them perfectly correct their anger cooled down, and they prepared to leave, telling the Community they might well sing a good *Te Deum*, for they were fully decided, they told them, to close the house that very same day, and would have done so if it were not for the documents they possessed.

The Sisters chanted their *Te Deum* with the greatest fervor, as they were invited to do by the retiring gentlemen. This last effort of the demon to destroy the work fully justified the numerous proceedings taken by the Blessed to procure all those authorizations for his daughters. Ignorant of the usages of the seventeenth century we cannot tell anything more of importance concerning those times.

CHAPTER XVII

DEATHS OF SISTERS M. OF THE HOLY GHOST AND SISTER M. OF THE ASSUMPTION EUSTACHE DE TAILLEFER, AND OF MOTHER PATIN—A LETTER FROM THE BLESSED EUDES

THE Order of Our Lady of Charity, recognized by the religious and civil powers after twenty-five years of cruel trials, was at length allowed the power of regular development. Several good subjects were received into the novitiate, and Mother Patin, full of new courage, applied herself more than ever to their religious formation. She felt the importance of this obligation from the commencement of the Institute. It was about this time that she sent Mlle. Heurtant, who had later become Mother M. of the Trinity, to commence the establishment of Rennes. God gave her the consolation of seeing the beginning of this second foundation before her death.

But sickness and death came as a great trial to the house. At this news the founder, always full of solicitude for his dear daughters, wrote to Mother Patin:

My very dear Mother:

I am very sorry to hear of the illness of our dear Sisters, and especially of that of my dear daughter, Mary of the Holy Spirit, but the most adorable will of God be done in all and everything! I pray you to assure her that I often pray for her at the holy altar, where I never forget any of you. When some one of our Sisters is in great danger it would be good that some of the others divide between themselves the exercises for the preparation for death, which are in the seventh part of the Kingdom of Jesus, in order to help the invalid. You must tell her that she need only to consent to it, and unite herself to this exercise in her heart and will. I pray you, my dear Mother, to make known this advice to all our Sisters, so they will always remember it. I salute them all very cordially, and thank them for their prayers for the mission, on which God has bestowed many blessings. I remain with all my heart, my dear Mother,

Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

Every year at the beginning of Lent the Blessed imposed on his children this preparation for death. In the book of which he spoke he counselled the same to all Christians desirous of attaining everlasting salvation. Here we find an ingenious means of facilitating the prayers for the dying, when the enfeebled faculties are not able to grasp what is going on around them—when they, perhaps, have lost consciousness.

This Sister M. of the Holy Spirit must be Mlle. de Saillanfaye; her vocation was no ordinary one. Several young men sued for and disputed her hand in marriage; they even went so far as to have recourse to arms; a duel was fought with dire results. This young lady was totally ignorant of these unholy duels. To avoid this terrible slaughter the judge had her enclosed in the Charity. Before very long she felt an ardent desire to give herself to God, and thus escape the dangers of the world. She begged to be received into the novitiate. Perhaps the prayers and entreaties of her mother would have changed her resolve had she not had the happiness of having a conversation with the Blessed Eudes. He said the Mass of the Holy Spirit for her intention for three consecutive days, and communicated her with his own hand; he then assured her that her vocation was from God. These words strengthened her conviction, the temptation presently disappeared, and she became a model of all the virtues. One fear alone troubled her soul: that she would not be able to be admitted to her holy profession, as her parents absolutely refused to furnish her with a dowry. God called her to himself after a long illness. She died on December 15, 1666.

The letter in which she was spoken of was written from the mission of Cerisy-Mont-Pinchon, or that of Saint-Esny, in the diocese of Coutances.

A loss yet greater, and one felt much more keenly by the Community, was that of the first professed, Mary of the Assumption Eustache de Taillefer. By her perseverance and energy she twice preserved the house from complete ruin. Her history is very well known to the reader. The end of her too short career offers admirable examples of humility. Her character was quick, approaching almost to extremes; if her answers or her actions at times were too hasty she quickly repaired her fault, so that she edified more by her humility than she disedified by her hastiness. Mother Patin felt herself obliged to humiliate and mortify her. It seems this was the means chosen by God to make this great soul advance in the ways of perfection. Her confidence and submission towards her superior never diminished.

Her charity was equal to any emergency. If there was question of any hard or difficult task she was always ready to lend a hand, without having any regard to her infirmities. This activity cost her her life. One day after having helped to heap up fagots of wood she was taken with an acute and violent attack of inflammation of the lungs, which placed her in great danger. She appeared to have had only one desire throughout her illness, to be united to God in her heavenly home; her patience was most edifying. The day before her death Mother Patin proposed to her that she would ask our Lord for her recovery; she was perfectly satisfied, but said she was much more resigned to die if God so willed it, and said further that while being perfectly satisfied because it was her superior's wish she would prefer to abandon herself to the Divine Will. She expired in the peace of our Lord, on May 30, 1668, aged forty-six years, and of profession sixteen years.

During the mission of Evreux the Community sent to their good Father their New Year's wishes, with the announcement of the approaching profession of Sister Mary Angelique de Balde. The reply to this letter is very important, for it shows the continuity and efficaciousness of his zeal in spreading the devotion to the Holy Heart of Mary, and how he strove to establish everywhere her feast as a fruit of his mission.

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear Mother:

Your beautiful long letter, so full of goodness, charity and cordiality, has filled my heart with joy and deep consolation. I thank you a thousand times, and I assure you that this same heart is full of affection and tenderness for you and for all my dear daughters. I pray every day in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the Mother and the daughters, for both your spiritual and corporal necessities.

I give thanks to our most adorable Savior and His Blessed Mother for all the favors they have bestowed upon the daughter of M. de Bellecourt (or de Balde), and supplicate them to make her a worthy daughter of their most holy Heart, whose feast is now established and founded in six churches of this city. We are now at the end of our mission, on which God has showered the greatest benedictions. I pray you, my good

Mother and my very dear Sisters, to aid us to thank Him for this, as well as for the new cross that He has placed on my feeble shoulders, by imposing on me the establishment of a new seminary, on which we are now working.

As for the rest, my very dear Mother, Monsignor de Maupas recognizes you and loves you as one of his dearest daughters, and sends you in this quality his holy benediction. I shall be here for eight or ten days more; then I will be obliged to go to Rouen to open another mission. I will have great need of your prayers and of those of all our dear Sisters. I would be delighted if I could see you before I go if time permitted, but I find that time is too short.

Adieu then, my dear Mother. I will not forget you in my prayers, and please do not forget me, for I am with all possible affection, for yourself and all our dear Sisters,

Ever yours,
JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

EVREUX, January 15, 1667.

God did not see fit to allow this holy Religious to taste the happiness of seeing the work, to which she had consecrated her life, placed in a position from which it could not be injured by the civil powers. Interior pains and exterior troubles had altered her health. The Blessed Eudes had the greatest difficulty in prevailing on her to spare herself. The three last years of her life were but a continuation of maladies; no sooner was she better of one ailment than another attacked her. She bore them all with incredible patience; nor would she dispense herself from the common exercises until she could no longer move. If a Sister sympathized with her in her sufferings she would answer: "Ah, do not compassionate me; I could not be a martyr if I could not suffer." Words worthy of the greatest saints.

It was then that her virtues shone with the brightest splendor. Discernment in the guidance of souls was perhaps the most remarkable gift she possessed. M. de Bernieres gave her, himself, as directress to a person who had been raised to a very sublime degree of prayer and contemplation, acknowledging that he knew no one more capable of enlightening her. Many times she strengthened the vocation of her novices by the simple assurance that God had truly called them. One postulant whose entrance she had petitioned from heaven for the space of one year, by the recitation of the Office of the Immaculate Conception, went to her one day and said: "Mother, I must go away sooner or later; I see very well that I can not remain here. The virtue of religion is too sublime for me; it is rash for me to stay." This good superior, presently discerning whence came this violent temptation, going on her knees invoked the Holy Spirit; then taking her crucifix in her hands she spoke to her: "My child, do you wish to leave so good a God, Who has loved you so much and Who has suffered so much for you? I can assure you that He wishes you to remain with Him here, so do not doubt it. What you feel is simply a temptation; remain in peace and think not more about a thing so trifling." The effect of these words was immediate. The postulant was delivered from the temptation, shortly after took the habit, and became an excellent Religious.

The most obdurate among the Penitents could not resist her. Her presence alone sufficed to calm angry feelings among them. One of them, being a prey to dispair, shut herself up in her room in order to commit suicide; she even refused to open the door. Mother Patin went there, and full of confidence in God commanded her in the name of God to open the door. The order was presently executed. The state of this poor creature was horrible; she seemed to have been possessed. The good Mother approached her, placed her hand on her head, and spoke to her with so much love, sweetness and goodness that she succeeded in calming her, and soon left her contented and at peace.

Another time, during one of her many illnesses, the Mistress of the Penitents came to tell her that a difference, or better said, a squabble, was in progress between two late comers, and she could do nothing to quiet them. Notwithstanding her suffering condition she went there, and spoke to the offending parties with such zeal and so much to the purpose that their hearts were touched with compunction for their misdemeanors. On leaving the culprits she told them they would have to do penance for their naughtiness by prayers, fasts and disciplines. It was her custom on these occasions to do so, and every Religious who is zealous for the salvation of souls would do well to imitate her. It really was sufficient for this able directress to make her appearance among those poor girls to pacify the most turbulent. The Penitents often said that her charitable way of acting was capable of converting a world, and that it was impossible to resist her.

These proofs of Mother Patin's ascendency over the souls she wished to win and bring back to God show us that this particular work of the salvation of souls was as difficult in the seventeenth century as it is today. People were pretty much the same in every age; their spirit was not more teachable for good nor more docile; and the stories told of the missions of that period by the Blessed Eudes show us, too, that religious instruction was completely on the wane, if it had not been entirely discontinued. But today, as then, holiness, prayer, sacrifice and mortification were capable of operating marvels of grace and conversion.

The time had come for the Venerated Mother Patin to receive the recompense of her labors. The Community had scarcely got over the effects and loss of Sister M. of the Assumption when it perceived the increasing infirmities of their good superior, and felt that God would soon demand a new and greater sacrifice. Three weeks before her death Mother Patin assembled all the Sisters of the chapter around her bed of suffering, and gave them this last advice:

"Here I am," she said to them, "my good and well-beloved Sisters, on the bed of death; I have only a few days to live, for which I pray and thank our Lord. I know that I have spared nothing that could procure your well-being and your advancement in every way. I recommend to you union among yourselves; the perfect observance of your Rules and religious poverty. In all you do look up to God; refer all to Him, and to His greater glory, live in peace, meekness and simplicity; this I have always taught you. Have no difference of opinions among you; let the will of one be the will of the other; this I recommend very particularly to you." Then she believed it her duty to ask pardon.

"My very dear Sisters, I most humbly beg pardon of all your charities for all the subjects of disedification that I have caused you by my sorrowful temper. I know well that for some time back I have spoken rudely; but now, to justify myself, I may tell you that misfortune so overwhelmed me that I sometimes said what I did not want to say. Now I can no longer hide from you that for more than two years past I suffered untold and unheard-of pains. Skilful and able persons have said that a human body cannot bear cruel tortures. I tell you all this, my dear Sisters, to excite you to bear with one another, so that if any one speaks to you a little roughly or is more hasty than usual, you may bear it patiently, for you do not know what your Sister may be suffering in body or mind. Adieu; I quit this earth to go to my God. I promise you that if I find mercy I shall serve you better kneeling before the Throne of God than I could do were I to remain longer with you."

After having asked pardon, especially of her infirmarians, and having thanked them for the tender care she had received from them she finished by recommending devotion to Saint Francis de Sales. "For I can assure you," she added, "that our Lord has performed miracles, through him, in favor of the establishment of your house."

God continued to prove her in body and soul, as He usually does with His more favored servants. The intensity of her sufferings made her say in all humility to the Sisters who waited on her: "My God, how much I fear that I may lose patience!" Sometimes God seemed to honor her with His particular visits. It was while under the impression of one of those favors that she cried out one day: "Ah, daughters of the Charity! but you are the happy ones; you are called to do great things! Since God wishes to please you, you should also give great pleasure to Him. Be faithful to your holy observances, work efficaciously for the salvation of souls, and you shall taste the ineffable joys of His consolations and the grandeur of His mercies!" Feeling her end gradually approaching she said to her Sister Assistant, Mother Anne Margaret Foy, her niece: "I am afraid that I shall not obtain the grace of final perseverance; I beg you to make for me the necessary Acts in that last moment." Her niece replied that she ought not doubt the obtaining of that precious grace, since she expected everything from the Divine mercy. Then taking her crucifix which the Sister offered her, the dying nun said, while kissing the five wounds with a holy rapture: "My strength is in the mercy of my God; all my hope is based on the merits of the Blood and of the Passion of His Divine Son. But I have rendered myself unworthy by my infidelities. Oh, if you please, say some prayers for me to the Mother of All Goodness."

She then asked for the Viaticum, to give thanks, she said, to our Lord for the institution of the Most Holy Sacrament, and to be, like the prophet Elias, sustained and supported by this Bread of Life for the great voyage to Eternity. When the confessor, who came to communicate her, pronounced these words: *"Quodcumque ligaveris,"* she cried out in a loud voice: "Oh, the beautiful words! I believe all that my Savior said to Saint Peter and to the other Apostles; I rejoice to die a daughter of our holy Mother the Church." Then she asked pardon again of all the Sisters, and she did this in such a paethic manner that all were bathed in tears. She lived a few days longer, and one of the Sisters having mentioned to her that she was afraid the Visitation Nuns would claim her remains after death, she replied: "Do with this poor carcass whatever you please; throw it into the common sewer if you wish." She had the happiness of communicating for several days longer, and it was after one of these communions that they heard her cry out in a sort of extasy: "O Prodigy! O Prodigy of Grace, bestowed on this little house of the Charity!" Without doubt Almighty God had shown her in that moment the extraordinary development that it was to make ing the future, to recompense her for all the toil and the unceasing care she bestowed upon this new-born Community.

She received Holy Communion for the last time on October 30th. The priest made known to her then the desire that her daughters had of receiving her blessing. She replied with her ordinary humility: "Dare I do so in your presence?" Having invited her the second time to do so, she added: "It shall be as you wish, and I will comply only through obedience." She addressed herself to the weeping Sisters: "My dear Sisters, I place you in our Lord's keeping, and under the protection of the Holy Virgin; you ask for my blessing; I give it to you with my whole heart, in the name of the Father Who created you, and of the Son Who redeemed you, and of the Holy Ghost Who sanctified and inspired you. Amen."

From that moment all the refreshment or care that the Sisters gave her seemed superfluous. "No," she said, "nothing more; my God alone." She rendered her beautiful soul into the hands of her Creator the next day, October 31, 1668, eve of All Saints. She was sixty-eight years old, and had governed the monastery nearly twenty years.

Her body was kept two days, and remained quite flexible; it was not possible to touch her fingers without moving them as if in life. Her remains exhaled an agreeable odor, and even the linen that touched the corpse retained this delicous perfume for a long time.

The venerable remains were enclosed in a leaden coffin, and buried in the cemetery of the Community.

During this last illness the Blessed Eudes was occupied with the missions he was giving at that time in the diocese of Coutances. On account of the Jubilee that was granted that year by Pope Clement IX, these missions were very numerous; in fact, uninterrupted. He preached at Marigny, Carantan, Notre-Dame de Cenilly, Brevent, Montfarville, Plessis, Montsurvent, Sevilly, and Quettehou. This continuous work and the great distance explain his absence in circumstances so painful to his dear daughters. He could not even assist by his counsels the decisions that followed that sorrowful occasion. It is even probable that he was made aware of the death of Mother Patin and the resolution they had taken to elect a superioress from the Order at the same time; for M. Le Grand proceeded with unusual precipitation in this important matter.

CHAPTER XVIII

ELECTION OF MOTHER M. OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT PIERRE. FIRST SUPERIORESS TAKEN FROM THE ORDER—COUNSELS OF THE BLESSED EUDES TO SUPERIORS

AFTER the ceremony of burial was over, says Father Costil, M. le Cure of Saint Julien, superior of the Community, assembled the Sisters in the parlor, and asked them if they wished to take a superioress of the same Order as the one they had just buried. All consented, except the young Sister de Balde. Although she was only twenty-two years old, and was professed only two years, she did not fear to give an advice entirely opposed to those of her elders; at the same time she showed the grave reasons that inspired her decision. With a moderate firmness unlooked for in one so young she said:

"It appears strange that we must take a superior from another Institute while there are many good subjects in this monastery who are very capable of fulfilling this charge, and that the Religious whose end is to draw to the fold poor wandering sheep would not have the capability of guiding those who obey the Divine Shepherd. We cannot hope to receive novices if we continue to place ourselves under the guidance of strangers. It is impossible to do so without causing serious prejudice to the honor of the Order. We ought rather to show the progress we have made under the guidance of her whose loss we deplore by proving that she has formed subjects capable of succeeding her."

These weighty reasons made a great impression on the superior and on the Sisters. Having manifested to Reverend M. Le Grand, the superior, their intention of yielding to his judgment he resolved to have them elect a superioress of their own Order. The Mothers of the Visitation were waiting in the parlor for the decision of the chapter; they thought it their duty to leave after it had been made known to them. The Annalist of the Charity remarks that the departure of Sister Anne Margaret Foy was very painful to the Community; after the Venerated Mother Patin is was to her they looked for assistance in their material wants, and who was the most devoted to the interests of the little Community, and they owed her a debt of gratitude. She had been there about sixteen years with Mother Patin, and had always been Assistant and often Directress of the Novitiate.

The election took place on December 22d, and the suffrages were in favor of Mother M. of the Blessed Sacrament Pierre. This Religious was born in Lisieux of an honorable family. All her relatives, as well as her own family circle, had been determined not to yield to her oft-expressed desire of following her early attraction for the religious life; finally, she entered in 1655, when she was already thirty-three years old, and at the very time when the holy institutor had ceased to be superior; she made her novitiate under the direction of Mother Patin, who quickly recognized her solid virtues, and had confidence enough in her ability to confide to her the direction of the novices, even before her profession. At the time of her election she had been professed ten years and was forty-five years old. The Annalist of the Charity, playing on her name of Pierre in a pious way, said that doubtless God wanted to establish the Institute as Jesus Christ established His Church, on a firm and immovable rock. Her many virtues, and the facility she had in instructing others, fully justified the choice they made in her person to be the head of the Community, and this was fully conceded by all the friends of the Community.

On hearing the news of the election the Blessed Eudes wrote the following wise counsels to the new superioress:

My very dear Daughter:

I give thanks to our Lord and His ever Blessed Mother with my whole heart that they have made choice of you to take charge o ftheir house. I have said the charge, and I speak advisedly, for you do well in not regarding the superiority as an honor and an advantage, but as a cross and a heavy burden. Reflect well, for in truth superiors are obliged to answer before God for the salvation of the souls confided to them. You should not look upon yourself as superioress, for it is the most Holy Virgin, Mother of God, who is the real superioress, and you are only her vicar or substitute. Hence, you ought to place yourself at her feet, especially when you perform an action belonging to the charge or office entrusted to you, and in that position renounce yourself and give yourself to her service, and beseech her to annihilate your spirit and to give you hers, which is that of her Son, in order to conduct your Sisters to their Spouse and their Mother.

To do this you have, my dear daughter, to do four things: the first, is to speak more to your Sisters by your deeds than by your words, being the first at every exercise, and endeavor to comport yourself in such a way as to be an example of all the virtues; the second, is to guide your subjects with the greatest charity and benignity, preventing them in all their corporal and spiritual needs, testifying to them in all things that true motherly heart that should beat in the breast of every mother; take care of them, be tender to them, and most cordial in your manner to all and each; the third, to be very exact and very exacting in everything relating to obedience, and to the observance of your Rules and Constitutions; to attain this you ought to study them well, especially those regarding yourself; the fourth, is to have the greatest care taken of the Penitents, and forget nothing that ought to be done for their conversion; for since the house has been established for this particular end, it is in the accomplishment of that work depends all the graces that God will bestow.

As long as you shall fulfil all the duties that belong to this Institute God shall bestow abundant blessings on your Community; but if you should neglect this work He will abandon you and give you His wrath instead, both as to the spiritual as well as the temporal.

God aiding me, I trust I shall be able to see and speak with you all very soon; then I will answer your other questions. You must not be in too great haste to write the life of a person so lately deceased, for many reasons.

I very cordially salute all my dear daughters. I have always had, and shall continue to have for them the heart of a true father, for I am in truth, my very dear daughter,

Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

PARIS, January 9, 1669.

The oftener we read those counsels the more admirable we find them. Experience has many times proved that the Blessed spoke in a spirit of prophecy, in expressing himself thus regarding the principal work of the Institute. If one house becomes relaxed on this point the spiritual and temporal well-being of that house is jeopardized. The most prosperous and the most fervent are those where the ardent zeal of the founder is best maintained. She never refused any Penitent, unless there was no room, and then it was a heart-break to her. Indeed, the new superioress gave the most beautiful example of zeal; her greatest joy was to see them animated by the dispositions requisite for true Penitents.

The Annals of the Charity have conserved other counsels of the holy founder addressed to superiors of seminaries directed by his Congregation; they are also very useful for all superiors of the Order. Here are some:

The superiority, in itself, is the most dangerous office of the Congregation, on account of the reckoning the superior must give of the disorders that may happen through his negligence, and, also, on account of the danger he is exposed to of consenting to pride and self-esteem, with which a person may be attacked in such an exalted employment.

1. The superior is obliged to serve all his brethren and to provide for all their necessities, in preference to his own.

2. He ought to employ himself willingly in the lowliest actions, as if he were the least and last in the Congregation, according to the commandment of our Lord.

3. That charity ought to be the life and soul of his government; he ought to act deferentially with his brethren, and rather requesting than commanding them, preferring sweetness to rigor, example rather than words, rather the spirit of meekness than the spirit of domination.

4. That he pray to our Lord before reprehending a delinquent, that He may dispose him to accept in good faith, and make good use of the correction he is about to give him; and in reprehending he should keep in view his own weakness.

5. That he ought not to reprehend any one while he himself is under the influence of any emotion, how slight soever it may be; but what he ought to do, before speaking to the culprit, is to humble himself before God at the sight of his own nothingness.

6. That he take as much care as possible of the health of his brethren, obliging them as far as he can in what concerns their needs; that he watch with interest how they apply themselves to their exercises of piety; that their mortifications be not immoderate; and that they perform no corporal exercise that is beyond their strength, or take up any study that demands much application for an hour or two after their repast.

7. The most important obligation of a superior in his house is to watch and see that charity be exactly conserved, and to endeavor that there be but one heart and one soul among those under his guidance.

8. That he treats his brethren with cordiality, and that the affection he bears them be the rule they abide by towards each other; let that charity our Lord bore His Apostles be their animating principle, and let it be the model of the reciprocal love between them.

9. That he be neither uncivil nor rude, but he should allow free access to all that wish to speak with him; and that

he endeavor to receive them with courtesy and with an open smiling countenance, when they come to him for any purpose; and that he listen with attention, giving them plenty of time, and reply kindly and affably.

10. While the superior is in charge he should not permit one iota or one single point to be omitted; that he be always the first at every exercise, and suffer no dispensations in his own regard, except through the same necessity that would require it for others.

Mother M. of the Blessed Sacrament applied herself to put these wise counsels in practice. Her government was very sweet and charitable; she became all to all to gain all to Jesus Christ. If later on she was reproached with a little weakness in this regard the cause of this fault was not a failure in zeal for the observances, but on account of the sickness and numerous deaths that tried the Community during her superiority.

* * *

CHAPTER XIX

THE CONSTITUTIONS ARE PRINTED—THEIR SPIRIT

ONE of the first duties of the new superior was to facilitate the study of the Constitutions for the Sisters by preparing them and sending them to be printed. Up to that time the Community had but one Book of the Rules, which was only a manuscript copy, and was left in the refectory, where they had to go to read it. The history of the formation of these Rules dates back to the first years of the Order. The Blessed founder labored at them in conjunction with Mother Patin and Mother M. of the Nativity Herson. His humility and condescension were so great that he always gave way to their ideas and leaned more to their judgment than his own. Before settling anything permanently he urged them to make the experiment by putting certain things in practice. A letter to Mother Patin gives us an idea of the manner in which he accomplished this important work.

My very dear Mother:

.. You might do well by putting the Directory at the end of the Constitutions, and add to these Constitutions these three chapters: 1. Of the reception of postulants. 2. Of the entrance of Novices. 3. Of the obligation of the Rules. But in the second article of the first chapter I wish you would leave out these words: "They shall remain there some days as visitors or strangers," for it seems to me it is not practical. As for the rest, take care to put these two chapters of your Constitutions in the places that may be most convenient; for the third, it ought to be placed at the end. As for the Ceremonial, with God's help, we will see to it on another occasion.

I thank you a thousand times, as well as all our dear Sisters, for your prayers for the mission, on which God bestowed many blessings. May He be eternally praised, as also our dear Blessed Mother! I salute all my dear Sisters with true cordiality, and remain with all my heart,

Ever yours,
JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*
EVREUX, November 12, 1666.

The main point regarding the reception of the novices is treated elsewhere, in a very precise manner, as well as the qualifications they ought to possess.

You must never receive to her profession any person who has not a great zeal for the salvation of souls, and a great desire of being employed and working for them; if she has not this qualification she is not called to this manner of life. It would be even impossible for her to work out her own salvation; not only would she be lost herself, but she would be the cause of the loss of many others. Each particular Community has a particular grace, which God grants to the souls He calls to that particular vocation. The particular grace of your vocation is zeal for the salvation of souls. So when you see a young person who has an aversion for this employment, and who shows a great repugnance for the work, you ought not receive her, even though she possessed every other quality. If you do the contrary you imperil that soul, and may sin mortally yourselves. But if you see a novice who has a repugnance for this employment, but is very determined to overcome it, you should have no difficulty in receiving her. For it is obvious that we cannot hinder these natural inclinations, and if overcome they may be of great benefit to our souls; besides, they will be a means of glorifying God, according as we surmount them.

As for those already engaged in this vocation, and who feel within themselves this deep-seated repugnance, they ought not lose courage nor persuade themselves they are unfit and incapable of being thus employed; it suffices that they hold themselves in readiness to do this work whenever obedience confides this charge to them; however, they ought to offer their prayers, their mortifications, and their other good works to God for the conversion of sinful souls.

The object of the fourth vow was the ordinary subject of conversation between the good Father and his daughters. The best considerations and the most consistent with the sublimity of this vow is shown in the first chapter of the Constitutions: "On the End of this Institute." The founder prepared the Sisters to receive it by saying to them:

The greatest joy that you can give to the Holy Virgin is to help a soul to issue forth from the state of mortal sin. By doing this you enlarge her empire; you show yourselves true daughters of her Heart, and you associate yourselves to her vocation: for God called her to form Jesus in her, and through her in the hearts of the faithful; you are called to have Jesus live within you, and through you He will raise sinners from the depth of their degradation.

To remove the fear, so frequently misunderstood by people, of being corrupted by near contact with those poor guilty creatures he said to them:

It is impossible for our Lord to allow those to fall into sin who for love of Him help others to rise from their sins. Purity cannot be sullied where there is true charity; no more than the rays of the sun can be soiled by shining on mud and slime. Away with all those vain fears and fancies, and place your confidence in Him who has called you to this noble, Christlike work. If you do not diffide in yourself, and do not trust in Him, He will withdraw from you, and your fall will be imminent.

This delicate point was treated several times by the Blessed Eudes. He reverts to it under the form of a promise in the *Wishes* placed at the beginning of the Constitutions, and it has been realized up to the present. According to the Annals of the different houses several preachers who have given retreats in those houses have observed that temptations against this angelic virtue were very rare among the Religious of Our Lady of Charity, and that they do not spring from the character of their work. Moreover, the constant tradition of the Order is that the Blessed held to this speech according to the celestial assurances he had received on this subject. No Religious, faithful to her Rule, has ever lost her vocation; this is a recognized fact.

To urge them on to a renewal of ferver he said to them:

Oh, my dear Sisters, how holy is your vocation, how advantageous is your condition, what goodness of God to you in bestowing so many prodgies upon you in calling you to an Institute so truly apostolic! Oh, how ungrateful you would be, and how contemptible if you would not recognize the obligation that you owe to His divine goodness! If you find some disgust in this employment, this exercise of charity, cast your eyes on the crucifix, and recall to your vivid imagination the sufferings that Jesus Christ underwent for those dear souls. Remember the example of Sister Marie Desvallees. For several years she asked God, with incredible yearning, to suffer for a time as much as it was possible here below the terrible pains of the damned in hell in order to save some souls for eternity.

If, after having quietly and prudently gone through the Constitutions, we should study them separately, and compare them with those of the Visitation, we shall find that they are not one and the same or a simple reproduction of them. The Blessed institutor has put his seal here, and it is easy to recognize it in the considerable and multiplied additions. Perhaps the sweet unction and suave manners of Saint Francis de Sales has somewhat disappeared. But in its place appears a special characteristic so essential for the new Institute: more of zeal for the salvation of souls and more forceful government. It was necessary that the Rules for the Religious of Our Lady of Charity, destined to govern persons under difficult and very different circumstances, persons who were often hard to manage and frequently rebellious, would have to have a different treatment, so that they and those over them for their direction and guidance, would know how to handle those difficult cases. In studying the two Constitutions it is clear that the zealous missionary wished to give to his daughters that energy which was so necessary to battle against the obstacles proper to their line of work, rather than that sweetness and pliability induced by the meek Bishop of Geneva.

The spirit of these Constitutions can be well resumed in these words of Wisdom: viii, 1. "*Attingit a fine usque ad finem fortiter et disponit omnia suaviter.*" "He reaches out with strength from one extreme to another, and disposes all things with sweetness." In the Constitutions of the Visitation they say that strength was hidden beneath sweetness; in that of Our Lady of Charity it appears to us that suavity is hidden beneath strength.

At the beginning of these Constitutions the holy founder placed as a preface, the *Wishes,* formulated by his affection for his dear daughters. It would be difficult to find pages more eloquent on devotion to the Holy Heart of Mary, an exhortation more exhaustive in striving to glorify and do honor to that most Holy Heart. At the time when those *Wishes* were composed (he had not yet established the feast of the Divine Heart of Jesus as a feast special to his Institutes) this Sacred Heart was not forgotten, and the worship he owed it was neatly and clearly explained.

Constitution the First treats of the end of the Institute. It is thus defined:

> The peculiar and particular end, and that which distinguishes it from all others (communities), is to imitate as much as possible, by means of Divine grace, the most ardent charity of the Most Amiable Heart of Jesus, Son of Mary, and of Mary, Mother of Jesus, inflamed towards souls created to the image and likeness of God, and redeemed by the Precious Blood of His Son.

The beauties of the work to which the Religious have to devote themselves are enumerated. All that the reader has read on this article on the price of a soul is admirably summed up. The conditions exacted by Rome, in regard to the separation of the Religious from the Penitents, and nearly everything practiced in those first days, are placed at the end of this important chapter.

The second Constitution specifies the persons who can be admitted into the Order. It absolutely excludes any person whose conduct has been at all suspected. For to work efficaciously for the salvation of souls confided to their direction an irreproachable reputation is essentially necessary for the Religious of Our Lady of Charity. As in the greater number of Communities, the distinction between Choir-Sisters and Lay-Sisters is also admissible. These last wear the white veil all through life.

The virtue of religion has been always the dominant virtue of this holy author, so the Divine Office has the third place among the Constitutions. This indicates the importance he attached to this exercise. On this point his daughters approach as near as possible to the ancient monastic traditions. They guard and keep in all its beauty the Gregorian chant; as has been already remarked, music has been prohibited in their monastery. On reading the dispositions with which they must sing or recite the Office we can see better the high idea that he wished to give them in regard to the holiness of this function, which is wholly angelic and divine, as he expresses it.

The Lay-Sisters who do not know how to read have to recite certain prayers to take the place of the Office. Those who are more instructed or better educated may recite in particular the Little Office of the Holy Heart of Mary. The first edition of the Constitutions prescribed it.

We now come to what concerns Communion and sermons. The Sisters may communicate twice a week, and every day some of the Sisters also communicate in order to conform to the desire of the Holy Council of Trent. The missionary, convinced of the importance of the apostolic ministry, said to himself: *"Vae enim mihi est, si non evangelizavero."* "Unhappy me if I preach not," reflecting on his own duty as he spoke of the importance of preaching, and of the proper dispositions for hearing the Word of God with fruit.

The daily exercises are Rules similar to those of the Visitation.

The Blessed Eudes was very exact in requiring that the novices would be healthy. He did not fear prescribing more austerities than Saint Francis de Sales. The Religious of Our Lady of Charity fast on the vigil of nearly all the feasts of our Lord and of the Blessed Virgin, and every Friday from the feast of Saint Michael until Easter. They take the discipline every Friday.

All that concerns the corporal refection, the annual retreat, the renovation of vows, the vows themselves, is nearly proper to the Order of Our Lady of Charity, and came from its founder. He also gives them the motives capable of filling them with ardor for these holy obligations. The cloister is more rigorous than the Visitation, and it is easy to understand the motive.

The beautiful chapters on charity and on gratitude show that both these virtues had root in the ardent and grateful heart of the Blessed. He wished that the name of Religious of the Order of Our Lady of Charity would not be a mere sound or symbol, but have its full meaning in the life of each particular Religious—that charity should be the queen, the rule, the soul and the life of the Congregation. The numerous prayers to be said for the benefactors and the means of testifying their gratitude are minutely explained.

The chapters on humility, the manner of speaking with strangers, of correction and penances, and of silence are well developed: It is especially the force of his character that one feels.

The different employments of the Community have been traced from those of the holy Bishop of Geneva to his Sisters.

Very often he has been reproached with too great severity in his compilation of the Rules for the Penitents. This judgment is erroneous; the holy legislator took only into account the manners and morals of the times when he wrote his rules, and the persons to whom he gave them. They were addressed especially to souls of good will, desirous of returning to God, and feeling the need of satisfying the Divine Justice. Every class was then organized as a little monastery, of which the mistress was the superior. The persons who composed this class were called Sisters among themselves; the Religious also gave them this name. The great penance is work; but it is made light by the variety of exercises they perform during the time. The recitation of the Rosary, and the singing of hymns are regulated in order to supply for canonical prayers. They make one meditation in the morning, keep some hours of silence daily, read pious books at a given time, and make the evening examen. We perceive nothing so very severe in all that. In our days, in the workshops and factories, they require more work, but there is nothing to ennoble and sanctify it.

It is true that perseverance in these exercises is a great mortification, on account of their regularity. It is not a rare thing to find among the Penitents, especially among those who have penetrated deeply into the spirit of their Rule, to see them arrive at a very high degree of holiness. Prepared as they are by complete detachment, ,their death is that of the predestined.

This Rule applies to the young girls placed in the monastery by their families, often only for faults that are the result of habit, but it may appear slightly austere to persons of limited understanding. In reality, does it not constitute necessary correction? Is it not the proper way of making those light-minded children and young girls reflect, and help to subdue in them that source of all evil? It produces those salutary effects every day, and does much towards preventing their headlong ruin. The other houses of correction through the land produce quite other results. If this code of law were introduced into them, and applied with that maternal authority which the daughters of the Blessed John Eudes make use of, there would be a marked betterment in their training.

The Directory that follows the Constitutions, is entirely that of Saint Francis de Sales.

The definite work of composition was not finished when Mother Pierre, in accordance with M. Le Grand, proposed to have it printed. She sent a request to Monsignor de Nesmond, which had been written, or rather dictated, by the Blessed founder for permission to do so; this prelate gave his approbation, and the printing was in progress while the Blessed Eudes was giving the great mission of Rennes. The proofs were not sent to or read by him, and the introduction of some modifications was a painful surprise to him.

If this last work had been accomplished under his dictation his spirit would have penetrated deeper into the Constitutions, and some discussions that took place later would have been avoided.

CHAPTER XX

SEVERAL LETTERS OF DIRECTION WRITTEN BY THE BLESSED EUDES—CIRCULAR ESTABLISHING THE FEAST OF THE DIVINE HEART OF JESUS—ITS IMPORTANCE

BUT nothing could detach the Father from his daughters. We have in these times letters full of the same sentiments of devotedness.

In reply to Mother Pierre's New Year's wishes, he wrote:

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear Daughter:

I am very grateful to you for your charitable letter. My mind and heart are too much occupied about you and the Community to ever forget you in my prayers; that is something I have never done and can never do. I always bring all my dear daughters to the holy altar, and they have a particular place in all my poor prayers, you may rest assured of that. I salute all in general and each one in particular, and beseech our Lord and His holy Mother to give you all their choicest benedictions, and to give you the grace to spend this New Year as if it were to be the last year of your existence, and as if you had no other occupation than to love our most amiable Jesus and His most holy Mother and ours, and to repair the failings you have committed in their love and service during the year that has gone forever.

I shall not forget any one that you have recommended to me; and I pray you, also, my dear daughter, to make a novena with the Community in honor of the Most Holy Heart of our Lord and His holy Mother for my intentions.

It is in the sacred love of their Most Holy Heart that I am for all, and for yourself in particular, my very dear daughter,

Yours devotedly,
JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

PARIS, January 14, 1671.

Later he addressed to the whole Community a letter to urge them to prepare for the Descent of the Holy Ghost. It was a particular token of his piety, in order to sanctify and enter into the spirit of the feasts as they occurred.

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear Daughters:

May the Holy Spirit of our Lord watch over and prepare us, Himself, to receive Him worthily!

The best preparation that we can bring to this great feast is to humble ourselves incessantly, to purify our hearts, and renounce our own will, which we ought to fear more than all the malignant spirits of hell. Ask our Lord for this preparation for yourselves and for us, my very dear Sisters; on my part, I never cease to offer you to Him, and to His most holy Mother, and I pray them that they may accomplish in us the designs of their infinite bounty, and that they may never permit any of us to do anything to place a hindrance thereto. I am much consoled to have such good tidings about you, for your Mother praised your fidelity and perseverance. Oh, what a crown of glory is prepared for those who persevere! May it please our Lord Jesus, through the prayers of His most holy Mother, to strengthen you more and more, and render you worthy daughters of Our Lady of Charity!

I am in all and for all, *corde magno et animo volenti,* my very dear Sisters,

Ever yours,
JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

Here follow two letters, written on the occasion of the profession of Sisters, that were received by them from the holy founder.

The first was to Sister M. of the Assumption Le Grand, niece of Reverend M. Le Grand, cure of Saint-Julien, superior of the house:

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear Daughter:

I am exceedingly obliged for the letter you sent me to tell me of the joy that our good Savior has given you by placing you in the rank of His spouses and the daughters of the Immaculate Heart of His Holy Mother. I give Him thanks, and supplicate Him with all my soul to bestow upon you all the virtues and graces necessary to enable you to become a great saint. You must overlook my seeming negligence in answering your letter, but I have been so busy for the past month giving a mission to a Religious Community, which was ordered by the Bishop of Evereux, that I had really no leisure to answer sooner.

I very cordially salute all my dear daughters, from the first to the last. When you see Monsieur, your uncle, I pray you to assure him of my regard. My two dear nieces know, also, that I have the heart of an uncle for them, as well as the affection of a father.

Do not forget in your prayers him who never forgets you, and who is, in the charity of the Most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, my very dear daughter.

Ever yours,
JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*
VERNON, July 19, 1671.

This Sister survived only two years after her profession. She was taken in her first fervor on October 14, 1673, leaving the Community very edified at her innocent life, and over her energetic efforts to correct her faults, subduing her violent passions, and especially by her zeal for and devotedness to the Penitents.

The second was addressed to Sister M. of the Infant Jesus de Bois-David, that young child who had entered the convent with her holy mother, and who became the first boarder. Grown up, she was faithful to the promises made to her dying mother, and requested the habit of the Order. She took the name that Mme. de Bois-David, her mother, had already honored. At the moment of her profession she received the following letter from the Blessed founder:

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear and good Daughter:

I thank you a thousand times for your letter, which was so cordial and sincere, and also for the many marks that you have given in it of true charity in my behalf. I also thank all my dear daughters whose names are mentioned in your letter for their kind remembrance of me. If all the others had the same mind they would be truly the daughters of Our Lady of Charity.

It was a very great sacrifice for me not to have been present at your heavenly nuptials, my dear daughter; however, I was with you in spirit, and sacrificed you to our sweet Savior in the Holy Sacrifice that I offered for you; I prayed fervently for you to Him and to His holy Mother to supply my absence at that blessed moment. I asked them to make you according to their own Heart. It is in this most amiable Heart that I am and shall be eternally, notwithstanding the machinations of all hell, to you and all my true daughters.

Ever yours,
JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*
CAEN, February 18, 1672.

How was it that the Blessed being present in Caen did not assist at the Profession? We do not know. His letter shows traces of a deep-seated sorrow, which only proves his great attachment for his dear Community.

Sister M. of Saint Agnes des Champs, brought up in the monastery, had been tormented by interior trials. The good Father often came to console her, and when he was unable to go to see her he wrote encouraging letters to her; three of them have been handed down to us.

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

Your letter, my very dear daughter, has touched me more than I can say, on account of the pains that you suffer. However, you should not be discouraged, but place all your confidence in your benign Savior, and in His holy Mother and ours, for they love you infinitely, and they know how to draw from all these things their greater glory and your own greater good; hence, I shall always supplicate them to bless and strengthen you. To this end you ought to say to them seven or eight times a day, for yourself and for all my dear daughters: *Nos cum Prole pia, benedicat Virgo Maria.* I salute all in general and in particular, and recommend myself to their holy prayers, being obliged to leave very soon for Paris. Live Jesus and Mary.

Ever yours,
JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear Daughter:

I give thanks to our most adorable Savior and His most amiable Mother for the solace they have granted you. You should say to yourself: "I am nothing, and good for nothing, for nothingness can produce only nothingness." It is an effect of their goodness; may they be blessed eternally! Give yourself to them with all your heart; honor and serve them with joy, love and confidence, and be careful to reject all thoughts that can trouble or disquiet you; have recourse to our good Mother Mary in all your sorrows, as a child would go to its mother. She will never reject any one, and she will not begin with you.

Be content, then, in your retreat with making your ordinary confession. You do not need to speak to the Bishop about it; it is your superior who should settle these things. I salute you very cordially, as well as her niece and Sister M. of the Nativity; also your good brother. I am with my whole heart in Jesus and Mary, my very dear daughter

Ever yours,
JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

PARIS, October 23, 1672.

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear Daughter:

I am very grieved that I cannot go and see you, but have recourse to our holy Mother; she has never rejected any one. Fear not, she will not commence with you; she is only mercy, sweetness, goodness and benignity. You are her daughter and she is your Mother, and a Mother that loves you so much, that when the love of all mothers that have been, are and ever shall be, would be gathered together in one heart, it would be scarcely a spark in comparison with the love she bears you.

Go to her, then, with a full and entire confidence, expose to her your necessities and your troubles, implore her assistance with all your strength, and you will feel the effects of the love she has for you. I supplicate her well-beloved Son and herself to give you their holy benediction.

Nos cum Prole pia, benedicat Virgo Maria! Live Jesus and Mary.

I salute the whole Community with fatherly cordiality.

Sister Mary of Jesus Allain de Barbieres was left an orphan while still very young, and had the happiness of being brought up by her relative and god-mother, Madame de Camilly. When she was about ten years old she was placed by this lady among the pensioners or boarders at the convent. She entered the novitiate when she was fifteen; she received the habit from the hands of the Blessed, himself, and made her profession when she was seventeen-and-a-half years old. Her biography shows her to have been deeply imbued with the spirit of the Order. She rendered great services in the charges of Assistant, Counsellor, etc.

Towards the end of her life she was tried with a long and cruel infirmity. At the approach of death every one was surprised to see that she had no fear of dying. She said: "I am afraid of not being afraid, but I place all my confidence in the merits of my Savior and in the protection of the most holy Virgin, my Mother. . . ." She had recourse to that good Mother with the simplicity and abandonment of a true daughter of her Holy Heart. She also addressed herself to her good Father Eudes, and he kept his word to assist her in death. We see that he was faithful. A long time previous, for she died only December 7, 1706, he had given her advice regarding this terrible passage, and had written with his own hand the virtues that should be practiced in order to die well and tranquilly: *humility, love and confidence.* She kept that letter until her death, but unhappily it has not come down to us.

It was to this fervent Religious that the following letter was addressed:

J. M. J.

God bless you, my very dear child! If you have the feeling of a daughter for me I assure you that I have the feeling and the heart of a father for you, full of tenderness and cordiality, as also for all my true daughters. I cast them all every day into the burning furnace of the Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary. I thank you, my very dear daughter, for the joyful news that you gave me of the permission given by the Bishop of Bayeux that you may keep the feast of the Holy Heart of our holy Mother. May God make a great saint of this good prelate. *Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.*

I conjure you, my dear child, and all my dear daughters, also, to endeavor to acquire all the virtues that are necessary to become true daughters of the Most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, especially humility, obedience, love, charity and zeal for the salvation of souls.

I very cordially salute you, dear Mother, and all my dear daughters. *Nos cum Prole pia, benedicat Virgo Maria!* Amen.

I thank our very dear Mother for the little picture of the Holy Ghost that she sent me. I am attending to the indulgences; and will see about the rest without troubling you further.

The Reverend P. de Bonnefonds was soliciting those indulgences while in Rome. The approbation of the feast of the Holy Heart of Mary, of which he spoke in this last letter, was for the monastery, and had doubtless been asked for on account of the difficulties raised by the former confessor who refused to celebrate this feast. Bishop de Nesmond, and his predecessor Bishop Servian, had approved it long before. During some years the Religious were satisfied to observe it in particular.

In those letters of the Blessed to his Religious we often meet this formula of benediction: "May the Virgin Mary and her Divine Son bless you!" He wished that the superiors would use it in blessing their inferiors. But that which proved that his heart and his mind were continually with his dear Sisters was the repetition of this blessing seven or eight times daily, in the midst of his greatest occupations.

The other letters from Paris prove that he passed much time in that city during the years 1671, 1672 and 1673. He was occupied there on account of the missions of Versailles and of Saint-Germain, by the projects of foundation and by the preparation for the journey of Reverend P. de Bonnefonds to Rome.

But at that time the most of his correspondence was carried on with his niece, Sister M. of the Nativity Herson. He took part in her family sorrows after the fashion of the saints, making use of those trials to attach her the more to her religious life, and making her esteem her vocation as little less than heavenly. Such was the letter she received after the death of her sister-in-law; under every circumstance his chief end was to make his children esteem their vocation beyond all things in this sublunary world. It is also a proof that the most eminent piety, as well as the religious life, does not extinguish, but rather elevates and ennobles the legitimate affection for the family circle.

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear Niece:

I sincerely regret the great affliction that has befallen your poor brother; we must pray earnestly for him that God will give him the grace to make good use of it, and recommend his children to the most holy Virgin, asking her to be their and subject to its caprices, in this age of the world! Ah! every way to lighten his sorrow, and I said Mass for his deceased wife, also one for himself and for his children. Oh, how happy we are in our condition of life, and how much more we have to be grateful for than those living in the world, Mother. I wrote a letter of condolence to him, trying in how much are we obliged to bless, love and faithfully serve our Lord and His holy Mother for having drawn us from the hell of this fearful world to place us in the paradise of their holy House! How you ought to embrace joyfully all the obligations of your holy state! I shall leave here, D. V. Tuesday, to go to Lisieux, where I shall remain fifteen days, or probably for three weeks; then I shall return to Caen, and then I will certainly come and see you.

I salute very cordially all my dear daughters, and am, with fatherly tenderness,

Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

EVREUX, September 27, 1671.

About this time this Sister was named Mistress of the Penitents; the two following letters are words of congratulation and good advice, very useful for the exercise of this employment, the most important of the Institute. The first is not dated but must have been written in February, 1672, since the profession of Sister de Bois-David had not yet taken place.

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear Niece and Daughter:

I was just going to see you and all the other Sisters, when our dear brother, P. Hubert, came expressly from Paris to Caen to take me there, where I am now to follow the calling of the Divine Master and go whithersoever He calls me; pray that I may have the grace to die rather than not follow when He beckons me, in the smallest as well as in the greatest actions of life.

It is He Who has given you the charge of the *Sister Penitents*, which is the most holy employment that you have in this world. Apply yourself to it with all the care, charity and fidelity possible. I salute them all very cordially, as also all my dear daughters; may they all be blessed, and especially my very dear daughter, Mary of the Infant Jesus, whose profession I earnestly desire.

Three things to prepare you for the feast of the Most Holy Heart: 1. Humble yourselves and ask pardon for the past. 2. Entertain a great desire of imprinting in your hearts a perfect image of the virtues of this Sacred Heart, and labor at this incessantly. 3. Give yourselves to the infinite love of the Divine Heart of Jesus towards the Heart of Mary, in order to be well prepared.

Ever yours,
JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest*.

This letter is very far removed from any show of severity for the Penitents, of which he has been reproached so many times. The following shows perhaps yet more affability, and kindness in their regard:

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear Daughter:

I thank you for the good news you sent me, and I render infinite thanks to my dear Jesus and my good Mother for the inconceivable favor they have bestowed upon you by entrusting you with the greatest of all employments done in this world, which is so agreeable to them—that is to say, the great work of the salvation of souls. Oh, how much it has cost our good Savior to free our souls from perdition! Do not be astonished, then, my dear daughter, if you find trials and crosses in doing the work of God; it is what is the best for you in your employment, but you must remember the charity, patience, sweetness and all the other virtues with which our benign Savior performed the work of His Father while He lived on this earth.

Infinite thanks to His immense goodness and to the incomparable benignity of His most sacred Mother, for having given you the feast of her most amiable Heart! May God make a great saint of the Bishop of Bayeux, who granted you this permission! I assure you that I am delighted. *Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!* It is for you now to endeavor to acquire all the virtues necessary to become true daughters of the Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, especially humility, patience, love, charity and zeal for the salvation of souls. It is in the holy charity of this Divine Heart that I am, my very dear daughter,

Ever yours,
JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

PARIS, May 26, 1672.

In this letter the Religious of the Charity are not simply called daughters of the Holy Heart of Mary, but daughters of the Heart of Jesus and Mary. It was about two months later, July 29, 1672, that the Blessed sent to his children his magnificent circular from Paris, where he was nearly all the time; this circular was meant to induce them to celebrate with all possible pomp and solemnity the feast of the Divine Heart of Jesus. It was written for his seminaries, over which he had full authority. It, nevertheless, belongs also to the history of Our Lady of Charity. The houses of Rennes, Guingamp, Hennebont, and Vannes, under the influence of Mother M. of the Trinity Heurtant, adopted this feast from their very foundation; that of Caen obtained the permission only after undergoing many difficulties, but its perseverance in soliciting this favor proves how painful was the privation. The other houses found it established in the whole Order, so took up the celebration of those feasts immediately after their foundation.

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

PARIS, July 29, 1672.

My very dear and well-beloved Brothers:

It is an imcomprehensible grace that has been accorded us by our most amiable Savior in giving our Congregation the admirable Heart of His Holy Mother. But His goodness, which is unlimited, has not stopped there, but has even gone further and given us His own Heart, to be, with the Heart of His glorious Mother, the Founder and Superior, the Beginning and the End, the Heart and the Life of this same Congregation. He has made us this great gift at the birth of this same Congregation. For although up to the present we have not celebrated a proper and particular feast of the Adorable Heart of Jesus we have not, however, had any intention of separating two things that God had so intimately united, as are the Most August Heart of the Son of God and that of His Blessed Mother. On the contrary, our design has always been, from the commencement of our Congregation, to look up to and honor these two amiable Hearts as one and the same Heart in union of spirit, sentiments of will and affection, as is manifestly shown in the salutation that we say every day to the Divine Heart of Jesus and Mary, as also in the prayer and in several parts of the Office and the Mass that we celebrate on the feast of the Sacred Heart of the same Holy Virgin.

But Divine Providence, which conducts all things with marvelous wisdom, has permitted us to celebrate the feast of the Heart of the Mother before the feast of the Heart of the Son, to prepare the way into the hearts of the faithful for the veneration of this adorable Heart, and to dispose them to obtain from heaven the grace of this second feast, by the great devotion with which they celebrated the first. It has been combated from the first by the spirit of the world, which never fails to oppose all that proceeds from the spirit of God; nevertheless, those who made profession of honoring in a particular way the most holy Mother of God regarded it with joy, embraced it with ardor, and have celebrated it during several years with the greatest fervor; and today it is solemnized throughout France, and in several Orders and Congregations with the utmost reverence and abundant blessings, and it is to be hoped that one day it will be solemnly celebrated throughout the universe.

It is this ardent devotion of the true children of the Heart of the Mother of love that obliged her to obtain from her well-beloved Son this signal favor, *that He gave to His Church,* of giving to it the feast of His Royal Heart, which shall be a new source of infinite blessings *for those who are disposed to celebrate it holily.* But who can do this? What solemnity more worthy, more holy and more excellent than this, which is the principle of all that is grand, holy and venerable in all the other solemnities?

What Heart more agreeable, more amiable and more admirable than the Heart of the Man-God, who is called Jesus? What honor does not this Divine Heart merit, which has always rendered, and shall always render more glory and love to God at every moment than the hearts of all men and angels can render Him for all eternity? What zeal ought we not have in honoring this august Heart, which is the source of our salvation, which is the origin of all the felicity and of all the graces on earth, which is an immense furnace of love towards us, and which continually thinks only of how He can serve us, and which at length died in mortal anguish for us upon the cross, as has been revealed to Saint Bridget by our Blessed Mother, as is related by an excellent doctor, M. Bail.

If any one objects, and says it is a new devotion, I shall reply that novelty in things of faith is very pernicious, but very good in things of piety. Otherwise, it would be necessary to find fault with all the feasts of the Church; they were new when they were started, new when they were celebrated for the first time, especially those that have been latterly established, such as the feast of Corpus Christi, of the Holy Name of Jesus, of the Immaculate Conception of the Holy Virgin, of the Holy Name of Mary, of Our Lady of Pity, of the Expectation, of Our Lady of Victory in the diocese of Paris, and several others, and a great number of new feasts of saints that have been added to the Roman Breviary.

If they say that it has not been authorized by our Holy Father the Pope, I shall reply with Saint Francis de Sales, and with a great number of illustrious and learned prelates, and great doctors, that every Bishop, especially in France, has the same power in this matter as the Sovereign Pontiff has in the whole Church.

Be grateful, then, my very dear Brothers, for the infinite grace and incomprehensible favor with which our good Savior has honored our Congregation, by giving it His most adorable Heart with the most amiable Heart of His holy Mother. These are two inestimable treasures which comprise an immensity of celestial goods and eternal riches of which they are the depository, *in order to pour them into the hearts of the faithful.* We should humble ourselves to the dust at sight of our unworthiness in regard to such great things; and we ought to enter into a state of profound gratitude towards the ineffable goodness of our most benign Savior, and the incomparable charity of His most dear Mother and ours. We ought never cease to bless, praise and glorify them, and invite all the saints and all creatures to bless and thank them with us. Accept with joy and jubilation the solemnity of the Divine Heart of our most amiable Jesus.

I am sending you the Office and the Mass; they have been approved by our prelates. Use all the care, diligence and fervor possible in celebrating this feast. To this effect: 1. Invite all our friends and persons of devotion. 2. If you receive this package soon enough have it published. If there is time there ought to be a sermon. 3. Fast on the eve of the feast. 4. Give a repast to twelve poor men in the refectory on the eve of the feast or on the day before the eve. The octave is not yet printed, so we will have to wait another time for that.

In fine, I conjure you, my very dear Brothers, to celebrate this feast with all the devotion and solemnity in your power, then send me word afterwards how everything went off, and you will rejoice him who desires ardently the holiest benedictions to be poured upon you by our good Savior and His sweet Mother, and who is in the sacred love of their Divine Heart, etc.

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

Whosoever reads this circular with care, examines the date, and weighs the expressions, cannot contest the fact that the Blessed John Eudes owns the title *of First Apostle* of the devotion to the Sacred Hearts. We have designedly underscored some words, for they will suffice in refuting the assertion that has been spread about that the Blessed J. Eudes only proposed to have them honored in the houses of his Congregation. This letter shows the immense results of his apostolate in regard to the Holy Heart of Mary, and clearly manifests his intention of propagating with the same zeal the worship and the feast of the Divine Heart of Jesus. An old picture found with the Carmelites at Orleans, in 1872, shows well the desire of the Blessed Eudes; it represents two Eudists lighting torches from a burning heart, whilst others are setting fire to a globe with torches already lighted. It is in reality the whole world to which the ardent apostle wished that his sons would bear the fire of the love of the Sacred Heart.

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CHAPTER XXI

SEVERAL DEATHS TRIED THE COMMUNITY TOWARDS THE END OF THE SUPERIORITY OF MOTHER M. OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT PIERRE—SISTERS MARY OF THE NATIVITY AND MARY OF THE INFANT JESUS ARE SENT TO BAYEUX

THE term of superiority in the Order of Our Lady of Charity is three years, and not more than six, after which she who has exercised this charge reenters into the ranks of the Community life—that is, resumes the ilife of humility and obedience. Reelected in 1672, Mother M. of the Blessed Sacrament saw with saddened heart sickness and death stalking through the monastery.

At first the Community lost Madame de Langrie, the foundress, on October 26, 1670; she was interred in the cemetery of the monastery; they could not yet make use of the chapel for sepulture.

The first Religious that died was Sister M. of Saint Claude Lamy-Dieu. This young Sister was especially distinguished for her obedience. Having been charged with watering the trees and shrubs recently planted she watered them—notwithstanding all the rain that fell that year—and certainly if we can credit the Annals, there was an abundant crop of rain delivered from the cloudy heavens every few days—simply because obedience did not distinguish between dry and wet weather; she carried her bucket unremittingly to her dear little friends the trees, the result being that they were over-tenderly cared for. Being at the point of death, she did not want to take anything, but it only sufficed to say to her that Mother Superior wished it, then she opened her mouth for the broth or whatever was given her. She passed away in the peace of our Lord on May 4, 1672.

The second was Sister M. of the Assumption Le Grand, of whom mention was made in a preceding chapter. She died on October 14, 1673, and was followed on the 23d of the same month by Sister M. of Saint Magdalen Madual. Formed to the virtues of the religious life by Sister M. of the Infant

Jesus de Soulebieu she made rapid progress; it would have been better if she had limited her mortifications. Very secretly she exercised great austerities and bore uncomplainingly a very dangerous sort of ulcer, which was not discovered until after her death. Some moments before she expired she asked permission to change her position, so perfect and so simple was her spirit of obedience.

The fourth whom death snatched away was Sister M. of the Angels Lair. Her life was one continuous act of devotedness to the sick and dying. For nearly three years she took care of Mother Patin in her numerous maladies. She never appeared happier than when she had to rise several times every night to wait on them, or when she had to pass the entire night by their bedside. To purify her and make her acquire more merits for heaven God tried her during the last years of her life with very severe sufferings, so that in speaking of her the Blessed Eudes called her the martyr of the Charity. He loved to visit her in her sufferings, to rejoice and console her, telling her many edifying things and speaking of his usual theme the Most Amiable Hearts of Jesus and Mary. He heard her confession twice, and made with her the Acts for the Preparation for Death. She died holily on January 9, 1674, pronouncing these words: *In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum.* They then discovered the horrible gangrenous wounds which her modesty made her conceal. She was only thirty-five years old.

After these four deaths the Community was exposed to a greater trial still: the Mother Superior, the Sister Assistant and the Mistress of Novices were seriously attacked with some very grave illness. However, God heard the prayers of the Community, and the dear invalids recovered, but others were chosen in their place; the Divine Gardener must have some more monastic lilies for His Heavenly Garden.

The first was Sister M. of the Visitation Galloy. A miracle obtained for her through the Holy Crown of Thorns permitted her to make her holy profession. In gratitude for this extraordinary favor she spent her fifteen years of the religious life in the greatest fervor; every Friday she made the Exercise of the Preparation for Death. So, like the wise virgins, she was found waiting with her lamp trimmed when her Divine Spouse deigned to call her toHis nuptial feast on July 24, 1674.

On the first of September following another young Religious passed to her reward, after six years of profession, in the person of Sister M. of Saint Elizabeth Massieu. She was a sweet interior soul; God purified her by a lingering illness, during which she showed her resignation, as well as her fidelity, by following the daily exericses, even when they were beyond her strength.

So many consecutive deaths occasioned great sorrow to Mother M. of the Blessed Sacrament; besides her own personal loss she was the butt of much criticism. In the monastery several Sisters were tempted to complain that the expenses entailed were excessive and ruinous; in fact, that she did too much and bought too much for her dear sick. Her conduct, however, was strictly conformed to the spirit of the founder, who had said that in taking care of the sick and infirm he would be willing to sell the sacred vessels, in order to procure for them all that was necessary. Outside the monastery the poor Mother was severely judged too. The great number of deaths was attributed to lack of nourishment, and the bad food usually served up to the Community; the Father Superior went himself to investigate, and did in reality regulate every detail.

At the beginning of the year 1673, at the request of the Mother Superior, the Bishop, Monsignor de Nesmond, undertook the visitation of the monastery. This prelate, whose episcopate had been so fruitful for the diocese of Bayeux, made a very touching exhortation to the assembled Sisters. After having shown them the advantages of the visit he invited them to open their minds to him with child-like simplicity, regarding their needs, as well as concerning the faults committed against the observances; by doing so, he told them, they would imitate the Divine Infant Jesus; with much ability and graciousness he made them understand that in speaking under these circumstances they would not be doing anything contrary to humility and charity; it would, rather, be an act of virtue. "For," he said, "if your Sister has a defect, or has committed some fault which ought to be remedied, why would you dissimulate, and be the cause of hindering her amendment and advancement. It would be just the same as if an infirmarian hid from the doctor the pains that afflict the invalids under her care. If the wrong remedies are ordered through her silence what will not happen? If you hide what is imperfect in your Sister you will be the cause of all the faults that she may commit, not having procured her the remedy she needed, which with the grace of God we ought and can give in this visitation."

This prelate entered minutely into the spirit of the fourth vow, and his words showed the esteem in which he held the Institute: "You ought especially remark anything concerning your fourth vow, for you have a special obligation of procuring its perfect accomplishment, in working for your own sanctification. For how can you work efficaciously for the salvation of souls whom God has committed to your care if you be not careful in procuring your own, by the faithful imitation of the virtues of which our Lord has given you an example? You are also obliged to render yourselves capable of procuring the salvation of souls. Pray, then, that God, Who has called you to this employment, may give you the graces to acquit yourselves worthily of it. Say often to Him with your glorious Father, Saint Augustine: 'Command, Lord, but give me the strength to do what Thou commandest.'

"You ought to expect from this first visit of your Bishop renewed activity in acquitting yourselves of this your special vow. It is a very important point, and one on which depends your eternal salvation. You should endeavor, then, to render fruitful the Blood of the Son of God, who places it in your hands as well as in ours. Instruct those dear souls by your good example as well as by your words. When you see them obstinate, and find them, perhaps, unmanageable, is it not on account of your unfaithfulness in striving to become perfect yourselves, and that you do not profit by the graces that are given you by the goodness of God to merit their conversion? Reenter, then, into yourselves, and humble yourselves when you see yourselves so badly disposed to receive remonstrances, fearing that you will be responsible for the lack of good example that you give, and resolve . . ."

The good Bishop did not finish the visit so solemnly commenced. After having interviewed some of the older Sisters he made choice of Sister M. of the Nativity Herson to go and govern the Convent of the Charity of Bayeux. This was the house founded by Mlle. Morin some years after she left Our Lady of Charity, as we have seen in Chapter III. She had died in the odor of sanctity on October 1, 1657. Sister Margaret of Jesus had renounced those ideas that brought about her separation with the Blessed John Eudes. The name that she gave to the house, the white habit of the Sisters, even the spirit of the work of the monastery, seemed to be identical with Our Lady of Charity.

Sister M. of the Nativity succeeded the Religious of the Hotel-Dieu of Caen, who had formed the first Sisters of this Community. As companion she asked for and got Sister M. of the Infant Jesus de Bois-David. Bishop de Nesmond wisely advised them to conform themselves to the rules and usages of the house.

The Sisters of Caen quickly regretted the departure of their Sisters, death having made much havoc among those Religious on whom they had founded much hope. The Blessed felt this departure very keenly. He saw that the superiority of the Mother M. of the Blessed Sacrament was coming to a close, and Mother M. of the Nativity appeared to him the most capable of filling her place. Besides, old age and infirmities warned him that his own end could not be far distant, and his dear monastery had not yet its Constitutions and its Custom-Book satisfactorily arranged. In conjunction with his niece he had hoped to be able to work with more facility and a better understanding. These are the reasons why he insisted on her and her companion to hasten their return.

One historian said that had these two Religious remained at Bayeux the house would eventually have become a convent of the Order. The zealous founder certainly did not arrive at this conclusion; if so he would have favored it. He wished to consolidate the religious spirit in the Monastery of Caen. It is to this end all his letters tended when he urged their immediate return. The three following letters are all that remain to us:

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear and well-beloved Daughter:

I am sending you two books, the reading of which may benefit you; I pray you to read them well and practice them better, especially in what regards sweetness, for a temper that is rude, sharp, dry, bitter, haughty and overbearing not only spoils everything, but destroys affection, tenderness and filial confidence, which ought to be in the hearts of persons whom we govern, and fosters instead fear, terror, contempt, aversion and hate; in a word, it causes the loss of a Community and pillories a superioress. I do not think, my dear daughter, that you are one of this stamp, and no one said you were; but the experience that I have had shows that the office of superior ruins many, in giving them that overbearing spirit, making them rude and sharp, dry and stiff, and that experience makes me fear for you. Study yourself well, I beg of you, and guide your Sisters with sweetness, benignity, cordiality, and all the tenderness possible. This is the spirit of our Lord, and of His most Holy Mother; pray often to them that they may make you like them, and pray also for me, and ask one of your daughters to warn you of the faults she may see you commit.

Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

Sister M. of the Nativity profited by this wise advice; indeed, so well did she conduct herself at Bayeux that her return to her own monastery was very distasteful to the Religious, and it was with much difficulty that the Bishop allowed her to leave. But the zealous founder was very persevering in his demands, as is proved in these two letters:

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear Daughter and good Niece:

I am exceedingly grateful for your kind letter, which was so full of charity and cordiality; it is true that our most amiable Savior has given me many crosses, but at the same time He has given me a great abundance of consolations. They published a number of falsehoods against us, but God made use of them for His greater honor and glory; and the father of lies, who was their author, was put to confusion.

I render infinite thanks to my most dear Jesus and His holy Mother for all the blessings they have given to your work in the house where you are, and I supplicate them to increase them tenfold, in yourself and in your dear companion whom I affectionately cordialize.

I am very much obliged to R. P. Gardien, of whom you spoke, for the charity he exercised toward you, as well as for his kindness to myself. I thank him a thousand times. My affairs are on a pretty good footing, thank God; falsehoods have been discovered, and I hope that our Lord and His holy Mother will continue to show us the effects of their particular protection.

It is not enough that you have exposed your reasons and your difficulties to the Mother Superior; you ought also expose them to the Bishop of Bayeux, and beg of him to remember that he must keep his word.

Above all, above all, above all, I conjure you, my very dear daughter, to impress well in the hearts of your daughters a tender and cordial devotion to the most sacred Mother of God, who is the inexhaustible source of all sorts of blessings, and an infallible means of arriving at eternal salvation. I supplicate her with all my heart to bless them all, and to shower upon you, my very dear daughter, and on your beloved companion, my very dear daughter, abundantly and continually their most holy and most precious blessings: *Nos cum Prole pia, benedicat Virgo Maria.* I am in the love of the Most Amiable Heart of Jesus and Mary, my very dear daughter,

Ever yours,
JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

The crosses of which he spoke in this letter were libelous attacks spread against him on account of Marie Desvallees and the disgrace of Louis XIV, which the discovery of the petition of M. Boniface exposed him to. He was in Paris during that painful affair. But nothing could distract him from what was useful for his dear daughters of Our Lady of Charity. To hasten the return of those whose presence appeared necessary in Caen he wrote again:

JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH.

My very dear Daughters:

I can add no more to what I have already said several times, which is that you should return to the house of your Institute, and the work of your vocation. Not long since I was speaking to the Bishop of Bayeux, and he told me that the last time you were speaking with him you seemed to be quite satisfied to remain where you are. If that is so I cannot understand what you wrote to me; if it is not so urge him on his word of honor, and also on account of the weariness you feel at being and living outside of your own center for so long a time, and also on account of the number of other Religious in his diocese that would do better in your place; and do not be satisfied with speaking once, nor four, nor twelve times, but urge him incessantly; supplicate him by word of mouth, as well as by writing. I remain with all my heart in Jesus and Mary,

Ever yours,
JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

Mother M. of the Nativity followed the advice he gave her. Afraid they would try to keep Sister M. of the Infant Jesus she took the precaution of sending her home before she left, which was on September 8, 1674. As for herself she was not allowed to return to Caen until February 8, 1675, the Bishop even wanted to keep her longer. It was on the feast of the Holy Heart of Mary that she reentered her dear monastery, which she never left again. Her venerable uncle testified the desire that she would never be sent on a foundation.

The departure of these two Sisters for Bayeux had had a good result in this way, that Mother M. of the Blessed Sacrament sent two others to Rennes, as is related in the history of this foundation. It was in the midst of these trials and consolations that the end of her superiority arrived, and in her place Mother M. of the Nativity Herson was elected on May 30, 1675.

CHAPTER XXII

SUPERIORITY OF MOTHER M. OF THE NATIVITY—THE FOUNDATION OF HENNEBONT—SEVERAL EDIFYING DEATHS—REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION—COMPILATION OF THE CUSTOM-BOOK

Mother M. of the Nativity Herson

FROM the commencement of her government Mother M. of the Nativity applied herself to the reformation of some slight abuses that had crept in on account of the numerous deaths and severe illnesses of the preceding years, and could hardly be avoided. She had the abstinence of the Mondays and Wednesdays more strictly observed; she put in common all that was in the use of the Sisters; finally, the parlors had few visitors. The fervor and goodwill of the Sisters made this reform quite easy.

In the second year of her superiority she sent Sisters Mary of the Conception le Lieppaul, Mary of Saint Margaret Danisy, and Mary of the Purification Tison to found the House of Hennebont in Brittany. This new house had been prepared by the united efforts of Mother M. of the Trinity and Madam the President de Brie, the latter being the foundress. Unhappily, the Sisters were rather slow in going to take up this foundation; the great number of deaths during the preceding years were doubtless the cause of this delay. However, we shall see it resulted in grave consequences for the new foundation. When occasions present themselves, when opportunities for good meet us half way, it is for us to seize hold of those opportunities with firmness; otherwise, they will elude our grasp, and like the golden hour lost in the morning, no matter how we seek for it, we can never find it again. Perhaps this maxim was not understood at the beginning of the Order; it is one of the chief causes of its slow development.

The fear of rendering weaker the existing houses had also something to do with this hesitancy. Forced too much it might become an excessive diffidence in Providence. History proves that the promise of our Lord is always realized on those occasions where there is question of temporal goods: "*Date et dabitur vobis*. Give, and it shall be given to you." The houses that gave subjects saw vocations multiply, generally speaking. In Caen during the following years twenty-two postulants entered; all of them persevered, and became excellent Religious. The seed that produces Religious is like that of plants, its abundance is shown by the numerous branches it produces; although it is renewed without ceasing its fecundity is not exhausted.

The House of Rennes was founded the same year as that of Guingamp. But if the establishments multiplied, that of Heaven became peopled, likewise, with the Religious of Our Lady of Charity. This charming expression of the Blessed founder can be well applied to the edifying deaths that continued to afflict the Community.

Sister M. of the Passion Leviconte passed away in the sweet sleep of the blessed on February 21, 1676, at the early age of twenty-nine years. She entered as a boarder while a child, and was very precocious in her innocence. As she grew to maidenhood her family wished to take her out and establish her honorably in the world, but she cried out: *Vive mon Crucifix!* indicating the choice her heart had made for some time past, and it was impossible to shake her resolution. The life of this young Sister, as may be supposed, was a profound meditation on the doctrine of the holy institutor on humility. It could be summed up in the *profession of humility* made use of by him, and put into practice by her in its perfection.

The following year, on April 29, 1677, it was a Lay-Sister, who was called to represent, and, in the name of all those who fulfilled and would fulfill those modest functions, take possession of Heaven. Sister M. of Saint Martha Poette had a great aptitude for the work of her vocation and her rank. She worked with activity and ardor, notwithstanding the weakness of her health, and she proved that this incessant work was not incompatible with recollection and meditation. She prayed without ceasing, especially to the Immaculate Heart of Mary; she never passed before her statue in the Community hall without addressing her, making an act of veneration, and a request. This holy Heart favored her with many and very particular graces. She was only twenty-five years old when God judged it the proper time to recompense her merits.

Sister M. of Saint Alexis Gouville died two months later, June 25, 1677. To follow her vocation she made use of a happy stratagem; as her family made use of all the arts of persuasion, and employed all the means in their power to alter her resolution. Her mother having brought her to the convent one day, in accompanying the foundress, Mme. de Langrie, she hid herself so completely that it was impossible to find her, and the ladies had to return without her. She would not leave the house again, although she was only thirteen years old. The Bulls received from Rome had arranged that the novice should have accomplished her twentieth year before she could be professed, but this long wait did not shake her resolve; in fact, only whetted her desire of consummating her sacrifice. The Annalist of Our Lady of Charity tells us that her great talents were considered prejudicial to her, and hindered her from acquiring that spirit of humility and simplicity so necessary to the Institute. This was one of the events of her life that she regretted most towards the end of her career. She said then with sentiments of keen regret: "It would have been better to have been born a blockhead, and be sure of one's salvation, than to appear to have the true spirit, yet be at a considerable distance from duty and exact observance." She was only twenty-seven years old when she died. Her loss was keenly felt by the Community, because her talents, well directed, had rendered her very useful in all the charges. She had a particular talent for governing the Penitents. Their tempers were so variable that it was very difficult to manage them; yet, notwithstanding her youth, she was able to handle the most obdurate characters.

The Community had to bear a still greater affliction. At the end of her second triennial Mother M. of the Blessed Sacrament grew seriously ill. Her system was so run down that after her deposition this venerated Mother became extremely languid. This suffering condition only served to enhance the brilliance of her many religious virtues. With perfect humility she took up with serene joy all the exercises, as well as the common life, and busied herself with the care of the boarders, besides taking up the work of secretary. She put all the archives of the Community in perfect order; it was while engaged in this useful labor that death found her on January 26, 1678. She was only fifty-five years old, and was professed twenty years.

In her last illness she sometimes remarked that if God would show her mercy she would unceasingly ask of Him, kneeling at the foot of His Throne, that the many harrowing losses the Community had felt during the past few years would cease, as she said the convent was becoming desolate. Doubtless her prayer was heard and answered, for eight years passed by ere death came knocking at the cloister door demanding new victims.

Reverend M. Le Grand, parish priest of Saint Julien for twenty years, superior of the Community, preceded her to the tomb. This good priest was found dead on his knees at the foot of his crucifix. Bishop de Nesmond named in his place Reverend M. Guibert, parish priest of Saint-Ouen, then of Notre Dame. The disgrace of the Blessed and his great age were doubtless the reasons why the Bishop did not think of conferring this charge upon him. The cross had to accompany him to the end of his life.

God permitted, however, that he profited by the superiority of Mother M. of the Nativity to work with her in the construction of the *Custom-Book* and the revision of the *Constitutions*. A new impression of the *Constitutions* had become necessary. The foundations of Rennes, Hennebont and Guingamp had exhausted the first edition. They had no more copies to give the Sisters. On one side, Mother M. of the Nativity, and Mother M. of the Infant Jesus who succeeded her, were happy to profit by the enlightened and wise advice of the Blessed founder, to make the needed modifications which his long experience and piety inspired him with. He, guided by a remarkable prudence, made—only in accordance with these Mothers—very slight changes. Perhaps the most notable was, with some omissions, the singing of the Litany on Sunday, instead of Compline; he took every care in the compiling of the Custom-Book, which had up to that time been in a very imperfect state of arrangement.

Certainly it must have been on account of the little importance of those modifications that, at the time of the reprinting of the Constitutions in 1681, a new approbation written by the diocesan Bishop was not considered necessary. The omission of this formality was regrettable, and years later was the occasion of much discussion between the houses. At the present time, when the observances are perfectly established and unified, the study of these debates show the love the ancient Sisters had for the strict observance of these Constitutions. We shall take it up later. Here we shall study preferably the Custom-Book.

Up to the period of the Revolution the Monastery of Caen had in the archives a design of a preface written by the hand of the Blessed institutor, which his niece wrote again for him before his last journey to Paris, at the end of his disagreeable business there. The manner of how the Constitutions and the different parts of the Custom-Book were formed is pretty accurately indicated:

LIVE JESUS.

The infinite goodness of our amiable Savior having willed to make use of him who is the last of men and the first of all sinners, for the establishment of your Congregation, which has been instituted, my very dear daughters, for the same end for which our Savior came into this world, which is not to call the just, but sinners to repentance, and to seek and save that which was lost, I am obliged to furnish you with a convenient means of fulfilling the obligations of an Institute so holy and so important.

Because it was necessary, from the inception of your Congregation, to place you under the guidance of some good and virtuous Religious who would instruct and form you to the practices of religion; to this end, my very dear daughters, you have been for some years under the direction of the Religious of the Visitation of Holy Mary, by the order of the Illustrious and Right Reverend James d'Angennes, Bishop of Bayeux, of happy memory. Yielding to my humble request, this great Bishop gave his consent and blessing to these holy daughters, and his permission that they would conduct you by the same path marked out to them in the Constitutions, Directory and Custom-Book, given them for their guidance by their Blessed Father, Saint Francis de Sales; I have taken from these Constitutions, Directory and Custom-Book those articles that would serve to regulate the exercises of the religious life in general, to which I have added several others regarding the employment and functions of your particular Institute. And having united them, I believe that I can put in your hands no better or more efficacious means of helping you on towards perfection, of sanctifying your daily lives in this arduous vocation, and of helping you to correspond faithfully to the designs of Divine Providence over you.

It is, then, in the name and on the part of our most benign Redeemer, Who is your true Founder, Institutor, Father and Superior, as also in the name and on the part of His most good Mother, who is your true Foundress, Institutress, Mother and Superioress, and under the good pleasure, consent and sanction of the Illustrious and Right Reverend Francis de Nesmond, Bishop of Bayeux, that I have given you the said Constitutions, which are contained in this book, with everything that you find in the Directory, Ceremonial and Custom-Book that I also sent you. I beseech you, my very dear and beloved Sisters, to receive them, not as coming from the hands of a miserable sinner, such as I am, but from the hands and the Heart of the King and Queen of Heaven.

Look upon these Constitutions, this Directory, this Custom-Book and this Ceremonial as the basis, the heart and the soul of your Congregation, which cannot subsist, nor render any service to God or to wayward souls, than by the faithful observance of the things herein contained Hence, I exhort you with my whole heart to be very zealous and exact in following each article punctually, without inclining to the right or to the left, and without adding to, changing or diminishing anything whatsoever.

This is what God requires you to do. It is in doing these things that you should place your devotion. Behold the way you must take to arrive at the gates of heaven; there is no other way open to you; do not quit it, however hard it may seem to travel, unless you wish to begin to wander in the dark.

In fine, this is the only means held out to you to become according to the Heart of your adorable Spouse, Who is Jesus, and that His holy Mother and yours may love you as the true daughters of her Heart. Amen! Amen! Fiat! Fiat! Done this.............of............16......

The date was left blank to be filled in after the episcopal sanction. The copies of the Constitutions and the Custom-Book placed at our service do not contain this document. It merits to be taken care of on account of the pressing recommendations that he made to the Religious, and because it indicates in a thoroughly good way how the wise founder proceeded in the compilation of those works so essential to the life of his Communities. Notwithstanding the parts borrowed from the Visitation his own part was very considerable. He could well say: "I have added some other exercises that regard the employment and the functions of your Institute."

The Custom-Book, even more than the Constitutions, appears to us to be more imbued with the spirit that he wished to impress in the minds and hearts of his daughters. He felt much more free in compiling it, seconded by the Mothers M. of the Nativity and Mary of the Infant Jesus, both of whom entered into his views.

The assembly of the Order in 1734, which gave it its actual form, was enlightened by the combined knowledge of Reverend Fathers Martine and Costil, both advanced and studious men, who had a thorough knowledge of the life and labors of their common institutor, and both able writers of his life. Reverend P. Costil gave to the assembled Mothers a manuscript copy of the Blessed Eudes which had been found in the Seminary of Caen. With these counsels and documents it was easy to penetrate further the spirit of the founder, and to find therein his last wishes concerning the Order. All his daughters, desirous of being inspired by his spirit, carefully studied their Custom-Book.

The material order of things, as well as the general plan, are quite different from those of the Visitation. Guided always by his profoundly religious spirit the Blessed put in the first place all that concerned the Divine Office and the religious ceremonies. The conservation of the chant obliged him to modify the usages observed by the Visitandines. He entered a great number of feasts in the calendar, feasts for which he had a special attraction and devotion. The ceremonies of the choir and those of holy Mass are minutely detailed.

In the convent the bell plays an important role. It is looked upon as the echo of the voice of the Most High, the sure guide that directs when and where His followers should go. The strokes are minutely regulated, and indicates the employment of each hour of the day.

The Blessed Eudes wished to make it a complete work. so as to dispense the Sisters from having recourse to other books. He arranged the ceremonies for the Visitation of the Bishop or the Father Superior, for the administration of the Sacraments of Confirmation and Extreme-Unction, and for the holy Viaticum. His tender piety shows itself in the touching exhortations that he places on the lips of the priest for the administering of these Sacraments. After having directed his daughters during life, the good Father wished to prepare them for the dreadful passage from this life to the next, and would present them himself to their Sovereign Judge. His love followed them beyond the tomb. The ceremonies of burial, the prayers to be said for them, are determined with an all-paternal affection. Here, too, as we have already said, he showed the tenderness of the zealous missionary for the good of the Penitents. It was but natural, for it was the desire of procuring their salvation that had directed him in the foundation of the Order.

We must note, too, that everything is in perfect conformity to the Roman Ritual.

The third part is entitled: *Customs and Usages of the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity.* It corresponds to that which the Visitandines call: Custom-Book and Directory, which Saint Francis de Sales placed at the beginning of his work.

The duties of the Sisters toward the Sovereign Pontiff, their Bishops and ecclesiastical superiors are regulated with that spirit of faith which the Blessed Eudes had in his relations with those high church dignitaries. The following articles treat of the exterior life of the Order and of foundations, of the founders and benefactors, and of the union between the monasteries. All is arranged with admirable prudence and precision. Then comes all that concerns the interior life of the monastery, the chapters, the culps, the election of superiors, assistants and counsellors, the canonical visit, etc. The wisdom of those two holy legislators are so mixed together as to form an admirable whole, and so well ordered that no parliament could succeed in imitating them even at a distance. After the rules are laid down as to the corporal refection of the body, clothing and lodging of the Sisters the question of postulants and novices is treated. Their religious formation and term of probation is quite long, their reception difficult. We have already described the beautiful ceremonies of Clothing and Profession.

A fourth part forms the Directory of all the employments of the convent, from the Assistant to the Tourieres. The Directory of the Mistress of the Penitents and that of the Pensioners or Boarders, evidently are both from the pen of the Blessed Eudes. The intimate knowledge he had of souls, and the zeal he had for their salvation was fully manifest in the first.

No detail of the religious life was forgotten. At the end of this work is found the *Ancient Customs and Small Observances.* Thus, all is in the most admirable order. The faithful Religious constantly knows the will of God in her behalf, and can remain in that peace that Saint Augustine defines as: "Tranquillity in the Order."

The Custom-Book, thus prepared, was accepted by a Capitular Act by the Sisters of Caen:

We, the undersigned, do declare that this book, in which we have signed our names, has been approved for our Congregation, by our good father and institutor, the Reverend P. Eudes, Institutor and Superior-General of the Congregation of the Seminaries of Jesus and Mary; that we have read it, and listened to the reading of it, with great attention, and we testify in the presence of God and of the glorious Virgin Mary, and to all the Sisters who are now existing in our Congregation, and to all that shall ever be in our Order and to all those belonging to it in any way, that these are: The Directories, Spiritual Advice, and Customs of the Religious of the Visitation of Holy Mary, according to the intention of our said father and institutor, to which has been added what was necessary for us, and declared to us by his own mouth to be for us the evident will of God: That among all the Religious established in the Church we conform ourselves to that of the Visitation, and he enjoined on us very expressly to practice the obligations with all possible exactitude, without admitting any future change or innovation.

This we have resolved by a Capitular Act, with unanimity of sentiment, and have signed it in this Monastery of Caen, this 21st day of March, 1678.

Bishop de Nesmond, to whom this work was presented, gave it a temporary approbation as follows:

Before giving our final sanction to the Directory and Ceremonial presented us, we ordain and have ordained that it be carefully observed in the House of Our Lady of Charity. In the same way we exhort the other houses, off-shoots of this first house, according to the good pleasure of their superiors, to observe them, in order that by doing the same things in the same way they may become more united, and so may communicate their difficulties or omissions, and represent them to us in six months' time.

FRANCIS, *Bishop of Bayeux.*

Given at Caen, this 4th day of May, 1678.

What the prelate counselled had been already done, and the superiors of the houses of Rennes, Hennebont and Guingamp gave their consent with the greatest joy. A letter from Mother M. of the Trinity tells us all the circumstances of this acceptance:

My very dear and beloved Mother:

Your very cordial letter has been no little consolation to us, and I praise God with my whole heart for the happy success that His Divine Majesty has given to your holy enterprise in the compilation of our much desired Custom-Book. May you receive your recompense in this life, and in the next, for it is the most signal service that our holy institutor could receive! My God! that we have read the testimony that our good Father gave us of the Holy Will of God, marked, signed and sealed by a Capitular Act! Is it not a powerful help to excite us to the exact practice of the holy customs, which are so advantageous to us!

It would, without doubt, be a great consolation to see at the commencement of this book a preface of our very dear Father, and it would be a great encouragement for us.

We return you the Capitular Act, which we joyfully signed, and we shall not fail to pray earnestly, as your Charity ordered us, to ask from His Divine Goodness that the secret be faithfully guarded. . . . . .

We shall be very pleased to have the Rules for the Penitents, in order to conform with our first and very dear monastery. Up to the present we have practised all that was done at the time I had the honor of being at Caen. But we shall be happy to know how everything is being practised at the present time, from the smallest to the greatest, and even the manner you have adopted in regard to their food, their bedding and other such things. We supplicate you of your great goodness to give us all the advice that you think necessary, in this and in all other things, for we wish only to perfect ourselves in all that we are expected to do. . . . .

I am in the sacred dilection of the Divine Heart of our sweet Savior and of His most holy Mother. . . . .

GUINGAMP, March 29, 1678.

This letter shows the joy experienced by the good tidings received regarding the Custom-Book, and the holy charity that the Sacred Heart kept up between all the houses. But this joy was, indeed, only for the Sisters of the Council. The mystery that surrounded the compilation later on was prejudicial to its authority; when those Sisters had passed away it became the occasion of important discussions, of which we shall speak. The printing of this book was seen to only after the death of the founder, and for a long time the greater number of the members of the Communities were entirely ignorant of its existence. This delay was occasioned by the deposition of Mother M. of the Nativity, who was not re-elected at the end of her triennial. They chose in her stead Mother M. of the Infant Jesus de Bois-David.

We believe that had the Blessed lived longer he would have added a third book to the Constitutions and Custom-Book; a Manual or Collection of Prayers, composed largely on the model of that used in his Congregation of Jesus and Mary. In giving their rules to the Sisters of the Good Savior, Reverend P. Herambourg had one on this spirit. As we go on we shall see in the following chapter that the Benedictines of the Blessed Sacrament adopted pretty much the same as did the Blessed Eudes for his seminaries.

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CHAPTER XXIII

SUPERIORITY OF MOTHER M. OF THE INFANT JESUS DE BOIS-DAVID—UNION OF THE MONASTERY WITH THE BENEDICTINES OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT—LAST CONFERENCES OF THE BLESSED JOHN EUDES

THE new Mother was only thirty-one years old, but her virtue and experience were superior to her age. The greatest trial of her government was the affection her splendid qualities inspired in the Sisters. Her very delicate and over sensitive conscience reproached her with drawing them away from the pure love of God. She then exercised severity towards them; something very contrary to her natural goodness. It mattered not. The Annalist of Our Lady of Charity says that they loved better to be treated harshly by her than to be caressed by another.

One of the first acts of her government was to cement a union of prayers between her monastery and that of Benedictines of the Perpetual Adoration.

Here is the Act:

Praised forever be the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar!

We, Sister Mechtilde of the Blessed Sacrament, unworthy Prioress of the Religious Benedictines of the Perpetual Adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, being requested by the very Reverend and very virtuous Mother Superior and the Religious of Our Lady of Charity of Caen to associate them to the Perpetual Adoration and admit them to a participation in the good works practiced in the monasteries of our Institute, we grant it with respect, in consideration of the merits and eminent piety of the Reverend Mother and her daughters; and we humbly ask a reciprocal union in the charity of Jesus Christ, and a part in their holy prayers, to obtain the grace to acquit ourselves worthily of our obligation towards this August Mystery; and, in virtue, of the power conceded to us by the Holy See, we grant with much affection the association that the Reverend Mother and her devoted Community have requested, giving them everything possible to us, such as the honorable amends, adorations, Communions, meditations, penances, mortifications, and, generally, all the good works and other virtuous actions performed in our Congregation, as if they were incorporated and made by express vow the victims of the Son of God in this Divine Sacrament, in reparation for the outrages that He receives incessantly from the impious.

In testimony of which we have signed these presents, and have had it countersigned by our secretary, and set thereto the seal of our monastery.

PARIS, November 4, 1678.

SISTER MECHTILDE OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT, *Prioress.*

By order of Mother Prioress:

SISTER THERESA OF JESUS, *Secretary of the Chapter.*

We have related this fact and inserted this act, for it is a new proof of the intimate relations between the Blessed John Eudes and his children with the foundress of the Benedictines of the Blessed Sacrament. These relations dated back, evidently, to the first sojourn of the Venerated Mother in Caen in 1642, for Reverend P. Costil had a letter that the Blessed Eudes wrote him from Autun in 1648 which supposes a relationship already quite old. The influence of the apostle of the Sacred Hearts at the commencement of this holy Order was so considerable that all the prayers of his Manual, for the use of an ecclesiastical Community, and all the feasts he instituted were accepted by them with eagerness. The salutations to the Sacred Heart, *Ave, Cor Sanctissimum;* to the Holy Virgin, the *Ave Maria filia Dei Patris;* to Saint Joseph, *Ave Joseph, imago Dei Patris,* are recited there to this day. The same litanies are in use every week and every year. Besides the feasts of the Sacred Hearts Mother Mechtilde borrowed the Proper of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary for those of the Divine Priesthood, of Our Lady of Victory, of the Compassion of the Holy Virgin and several others. The Blessed Eudes was much pleased by the request for a union of prayers with this pious Institute, made by Mother M. of the Infant Jesus.

The last years of the holy institutor, so tried by the disgrace of Louis XIV, and the fears he had concerning the future of his Congregation of Jesus and Mary, were consoled by the sweetness and frequency of his relations with Our Lady of Charity. The labor of compiling the Custom-Book often brought him to the monastery, where he found in the superiors hearts docile and full of the zeal that consumed himself. He had even the consolation of conversing that same year with Mother M. of the Trinity Heurtant, who had come to Caen to get some subjects destined for the foundation that Madame d'Argouge wished to make in Paris. These two great souls understood each other well. They had not met since the mission of Rennes, and in that interval the houses of Rennes, Hennebont and Guingamp had been founded, largely through the ascendancy that the holiness of this pious Religious had over others. The projects for the foundations of Paris and Vannes were ripening. The grain of mustard, so small at the beginning, was doing its work—sprouting out; notwithstanding contradictions, trials and troubles of all kinds it still went on growing. There was a consoling future for the heart of the good Father, and the reading of the old manuscripts shows how he bore himself in this regard.

It shows him full of tenderness for his dear daughters. In these visits he was not satisfied with holding conversations with the principal Sisters concerning the labors that occupied them; he visited the infirmaries, consoled and heard the confessions of the sick, said a kind word to every one, made some useful observation in passing, and finally, often gathered the Community together to nourish them with the bread of the Divine Word.

One day they told him that a very fine statue of the Holy Virgin, that had been sent by the Sisters of Rennes, had been put in a barrel in the attic, because they did not know where they could place it permanently. With an artless, kind expression on his countenance, he repeated several times: "The Holy Virgin in a barrel! is she in prison?" The smiles of the Sisters could not rally him out of his serious mood; then he said that they should take the statue and put it in a proper place where it could be honored. The Sisters brought it down; he blessed it with deep sentiments of filial love; the Community went on their knees because, he said, "God never refuses the first grace that is asked Him before a statue that has been blessed. Every time that you salute her by reciting the *Sub tuum*, three *Ave Marias*, three times the *Monstra Te*, you will obtain a blessing." Mother M. of the Infant Jesus proposed to place this statute in the Novitiate to obtain the favor that the vacancies made by so many deaths would be filled. This prayerful request was speedily answered. Twenty-two new Religious, we have been told, were received during the five ensuing years.

Another time he met a Sister and he asked her: "Do you love the good God? How do you make an act of love for Him?"

The Sister simply replied she did so more by her actions than by her words, so as to prove to Him that she loved Him with her whole heart.

"You must know well, my dear daughter," he continued, "that you have two hearts—a large heart and a small one; the small one is yours, but the large heart belongs to our good Savior; however, it is also yours, since the Eternal Father gave it to us Himself. But it is with this adorable heart that man must love God. What could you do with your little insignificant heart? Say, then, henceforth: 'My God, I love you with my whole large heart.' "

Under this simple and practical form, union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus is very easy.

The good Father was attentive to the least thing: An old Sister, one who was very virtuous, forgot herself so far as to make use of a few words that savored of affectation; he reproved her severely, and repeated what he had always said under similar circumstances: "My daughters, I beg of you to abhor the world, and its dangerous maxims, in everything: let me see among you a great simplicity in your manners and in your speech."

Shortly before the annual renovation of the vows one of his discourses indicated the dispositions with which they should perform this ceremony. He said: "The first thing, and the most requisite of all that ought to be done on this occasion, is to present to God a heart truly humble, and annihilated at the sight of your own miseries. You must even go back in spirit into your family circle, and try and recall the most humiliating incidents to your minds, so as to draw forth from this remembrance that humility required for your present condition, and strive to cherish that contempt for yourself which these thoughts may raise in you. Thus persuaded of your worthlessness and baseness you may bring your sacrifice to God and make it more agreeable to your Divine Spouse, Who pleases Himself in the humility and abasement of souls whom He loves."

The slightest details of the Christian life did not escape him. He recommended them one day to pay great attention and to say the grace before and after meals with particular piety, otherwise they would frustrate the ends of this prayer, and deprive founders and foundresses of that aid they should receive from those prayers. The formula in use demands for them celestial goods in return for the temporal goods they have given the Communities. He profited by this circumstance to teach the virtue of gratitude to his dear daughters.

Consulted regarding the reception of a postulant who had presented herself, he gave this wise advice: "Consider well if she has the requisite qualifications—that is, if she is firmly resolved to *renounce her own will; if she has a great zeal for the salvation of souls;* if she is sound in body, and if she has a naturally good spirit. For you must understand well how important it is to take care what young girls you receive, and examine them very carefully, so as to find out what they are while in the Novitiate. Above all, above all, above all, take care not to receive to her profession any person who has *a worldly spirit, or who has a haughty, proud disposition.*"

The holiness and the sublimity of the fourth vow, and the means they should employ to obtain the grace to remain faithful, continued to be the subject matter of his discourses to them. On this subject his heart overflowed. The fear of repetition never hindered him from making such themes the subjects of his ordinary conversation with them.

The Divine Office was also an object of his many instructions. This holy priest, before commencing his Breviary, often said to himself: "My Breviary—what an account I must give of how I say it!" Exciting himself to fervor in this way, he also instructed his daughters in the grave obligation they had of acquitting themselves of this angelic function. He often came to listen, to improvise and warn them of the least faults committed, the least mispronounced syllable. He ordered that the ceremonies would be performed with gravity and interior application. The singing was especially the object of his attention. He wished it to be simple, well executed, not to please the ears of men but those of God and the heavenly Court. At other times some versicles of the Office touched him more particularly, and gave him a chance to make commentaries on them, in order to excite the Sisters to more fervor, and give them a means of occupying themselves interiorly during the psalmody.

CHAPTER XXIV

LAST ACTS OF THE BLESSED JOHN EUDES IN FAVOR OF OUR LADY OF CHARITY—HIS HOLY DEATH

THOSE pious entertainments were like the singing of the swan—dying, it sang with more beauty and pathos; and his last words were pronounced in a voice both powerful and eloquent. These thoughts and expressions of his have been piously collected, and they continue now to produce the same good as they did in those far-off days. The strength of the dear old man was diminishing daily. He was recalled to Paris in the month of June, 1679. It was the end of his troubles. Louis XIV received him on the 16th and was very amiable towards him. Several of the courtiers and parliamentarians were less generous than the King, and even years after the recollection of the unfortunate appeal of M. Boniface made them oppose the establishment in Paris of a House of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. The rancor of the Jansenists was like the rancor of the liberals, immortal.

Happy in having saved the existence of his Congregation the Blessed institutor returned to Caen. This long journey was made in a stage-coach. This rugged mode of travel brought on an infirmity that obliged him to discontinue his apostolic labors, and warned him that death was not far distant. From that time he occupied himself only in regulating his affairs, and finishing his most important and most beautiful work: "The Admirable Heart of the Most Sacred Mother of God." He had the consolation of putting the last touches to it on July 25, 1680, some weeks before his death.

Among the affairs that he desired to regulate he found one question of interest between the Seminary of Caen and the Charity. In his ordinary manner, and with exquisite courtesy, he yielded to each one their rights. The act has been often alluded to and belongs to this history.

As there is nothing so displeasing to God—Who is called the God of peace and charity—as trouble and division, so also is there nothing more pleasing than peace and concord, especially among persons consecrated in a particular way to His Divine Majesty, such as are ecclesiastical and religious persons, priests of the Seminary of Caen and the Religious of Our Lady of Charity. Being justly afraid that only trouble and division may continue between these two Communities, concerning certain temporal interests that are in need of being disentangled; to avoid inconveniences that might occur, the said priests and Religious have agreed to meet of their own free will, and consequently they are unanimous in obliging themselves, mutually, to hold and execute inviolably the following articles:

1. Sir John le Roux, Lord of Langrie, President of the Parliament of Rouen, who founded the said Religious of Our Lady of Charity, having made an avowal written and signed by his own hand on October 18, 1651, which the said priests seized, in which he declares that of the 14,000 livres produced in the contract of the said foundation there are 4,000 left to provide a percentage for the use of said priests of the said Seminary of Caen; these same priests declare that they do not pretend ever to ask for the reimbursement of this sum, having given it freely and voluntarily, and with all their heart, for the love of our Lord and of His holy Mother, in order to contribute to the establishment and maintenance of said Monastery of Our Lady of Charity

2. Besides the said sum of 4,000 livres, the said Fathers have also furnished more than 2,600 livres as well, for the rent and furnishing of the house, in all that was necessary for the dwelling of the Religious, as for their provisions and other necessaries at the commencement of their establishment; as also for the expenses of several journeys made to Paris, Rome, Rouen and elsewhere, in order to obtain letters from the King so that the said establishment could be verified in Parliament, and also to get the Bulls from Our Holy Father the Pope; and the said Religious pretend that they have given the said Fathers some part of this money; the said Fathers stoutly maintain that they received only 750 livres, only a fractional part of what is due them. They have resolved, in order to avoid wrangling and disputes, and in the interests of peace, to give up entirely and unreservedly all that is due them in any manner, and the said priests renounce forever on their own part, and on the part of their successors, all claim to it; and the said Religious themselves, and those that may succeed them, need never disquiet themselves regarding this completely cancelled debt; and to this end these two Communities—the said Priests and the said Religious—declare they are mutually satisfied, for the present and the future.

Given at Caen, today, November 14, 1679.

This document was signed only by Sister Mary of the

Infant Jesus, Sister M. of the Nativity and Sister M. of Jesus Allain, doubtless because it was for the seminary. The Monastery of Our Lady of Charity had to keep a copy of this act, signed with the signature of the Blessed and of the Superior of the Seminary. The importance of this delicate affair is very evident; it does not appear to have been settled without difficulty. Its conclusion was a distinct relief for the good Father.

Some months later, feeling all his strength diminish gradually, he convoked a regular assembly of his Congregation. When they were all together in Caen, on June 27, 1680, the Blessed institutor in a short address prayed the members who composed that body to give the Congregation a successor capable of repairing the innumerable faults that he had committed during his long administration: "What a misfortune," he added, "if, instead of a successor who would and could repair my faults, you would give me one who would augment their number, and who by his bad conduct would furnish our enemies with the means of destroying the work of God. Thus, my dear Brothers, I conjure you to think well, and to elect some one of whom you need have no apprehension, one who will not cause the Congregation any unhappiness."

The assembled priests had quite another idea of his government; but forced by the evident necessity they proceeded to the election. Reverend P. Blouet de Camilly was elected unanimously, less two votes. He was the son of Madam Blouet de Camilly, the zealous co-operatrix and the wise, intelligent friend of the Blessed Eudes in all his works, and particularly in the foundation of Our Lady of Charity. It is certain that the holy old man gave him the two votes that his title of Superior-General allowed him to cast; without which at least three votes would have been given to another member—that of Reverend P. Blouet and the two belonging to the Blessed. His journal gives the expression of the sincere joy that this election caused him. One historian has insinuated the contrary.

In this circumstance his humility showed itself in all its simple dignity, which is equaled only in the lives of the greatest saints. As soon as the election was over, the new superior being proclaimed, the venerable old man cast himself at the feet of the new superior to ask his blessing, and receive his orders. This was not a passing act just for the occasion; he was always the first to give Reverend P. Blouet marks of his perfect submission. He forced him to exercise all the authority and make use of all the privileges due to his office.

Disencumbered from the weight of superiority the Blessed servant of God gave all his thoughts to prepare for his last passage. When his book on the Admirable Heart of the Mother of God was finished he commenced his annual retreat. He well understood it would be his last, and he made it a preparation for death. The fervor with which this thought inspired him was so great that notwithstanding all his infirmities he neglected none of his ordinary exercises. We can, however, say that all his life was passed in this preparation. Besides his ordinary retreat, he performed every year during the space of ten days those pious practices prescribed in his book, "The Life and Kingdom of Jesus," to dispose himself for this terrible passage.

For a long time, also, to obtain the grace of a happy death, he recited a little chaplet of his own composition every evening before taking his repose. After having said three times his ordinary ejaculatory prayer, *Veni Domini Jesu,* Come, Lord Jesus! he said on the small beads thirty-four times Jesus Mary, to honor the years our Lord spent on this earth, and to testify to Him that he desired to expire pronouncing these sacred names. On the three large beads he said these other words, in honor of the Most Holy Trinity: *Benedicta tu in mulieribus, at benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesus.* Those under his direction often received from him the counsel to adopt this pious custom. His children easily took it up; they could more easily adopt it, as the ordinary prayers said for the dying hold this particular prayer; these acts were made by the Blessed himself as he saw death stealing over him.

In 1673 he addressed a note, sealed it and gave it to one of his Brothers, asking him not to open it until he saw that he was in danger of death, and then to procure him all the spiritual help it called for.

Here are some of the prirncipal requests he made: 1. That he would be administered soon enough—that is, while he had full use of his reason and could appreciate the full benefit of the Sacraments of the Holy Viaticum and Extreme-Unction. 2. That they would make the exercises of the Preparation of Death from the "Life and Kingdom of Jesus," and the protestations marked in the little book of the "Contract of

Man with God in Holy Baptism." 3. That they help him to gain the Plenary indulgences granted at the hour of death. 4. That they make acts of faith and other virtues in his name, if he should lose consciousness. 5. That his body should be buried in the little white habit that he wore in honor of the three great privileges of the Holy Virgin—that is to say, of her Immaculate Conception, of her holy maternity, and of her perpetual virginity; with his scapular, his Rosary and a little statue of the Holy Virgin holding her Son.

Out of gratitude for the benefits received from God he wished to add to those a copy of his *Magnificat,* such as it is written in the Manual of his Congregation.

The Sisters of Our Lady of Charity ought to conform themselves to these holy practices, which their Father nearly always prescribed for them, as we have seen in one of his letters to Reverend Mother Patin.

Besides, the Blessed Eudes had often asked of God, through the intercession of the Holy Virgin, the grace to die with the faith of the martyrs, the purity of the virgins, and the contrition of the holy penitents, in the love, through the love and for the love of Jesus. So many fervent prayers could not but have been heard; this long preparation for death procured him a preparation at the time of his death that was much more perfect.

Immediately after this fervent retreat the holy old man wished to visit his dear daughters for the last time, so he went to the monastery to recommend himself to their prayers and to bid them a final adieu. With a voice scarcely distinguishable, but full of unction, he told them that he was about to leave them, about to go back to the bed from which he never expected to rise again. Then, after giving them his last advice, he thanked them affectionately for their faithful attachment to him. Before leaving them he knelt down, and raising his eyes and hands towards heaven, he asked God to bestow His graces in abundance upon them, and to return them many benedictions for their service to himself. Then he gave them his blessing.

It would be easier to imagine this last scene than to describe it; it would be well worthy of inspiring the talents of painters and poets. We have recounted this with the simplicity which Reverend P. Martine, alone, could conserve the remembrance. He added that the Sisters were bathed in tears at the thought that they would never hear his voice again, that voice that had guided them so long in the way of perfection, and never more see this good Father who loved them so much. They regarded his last words as a prophecy of his approaching death, and they had good reason.

After having given to the Order of Our Lady of Charity this proof of his tenderness, the Blessed institutor went back to the seminary which he was never more to leave. Attacked with a violent fever, and oppressed by several other grave infirmities, he very soon took to his bed, perfectly resigned to suffer all that the Divine Will judged good to send him. In the midst of the greatest sufferings his patience grew more perfect. Not a murmur or complaint ever passed his lips; his Brothers bestowed upon him the greatest care, and heard nothing from him except acts of resignation and love.

Fear of the judgments of God, the frequent subject of his sermons, had penetrated his very soul. But now, in this his last illness, he had no place for that fear; only a sentiment of sweet confidence in the Divine goodness.

To one of his brethren who asked if he did not fear death, he replied: "I have good reason to fear death, but I hope in the mercy of my God, and in the infinite merits of my good Savior. I hope in the goodness of His most holy Mother, who is mine, too, that she will never abandon me."

The Reverend P. Blouet de Camilly called the most distinguished doctors. The holy invalid felt the uselessness of their knowledge; he resigned himself, by obedience, to their care, took the remedies they ordered, and submitted to everything, no matter how humiliating it might be. The violence of the disease, and the pain he naturally felt, drew some involuntary sighs from him. One of the assistants asked him: "Father, do you suffer much?" "Terribly," he replied. "But Father, do you not wish to suffer all these pains for the love of our Lord?" The invalid answered:

"Ah, with all my heart, with all my heart. Yes, my Savior, it is with all my heart that I accept all the pains that you make me suffer. It is very wise and just, my God, that the criminal should suffer, since the Innocent has endured so much; it is but reasonable that the servant endure, since the Master suffered so much. Yes, my God, it is with all my heart, since you so will it; you know that I never had any other will than yours; do with me according to your good pleasure."

God showed Himself full of goodness and mercy for His humble and submissive servant, and overwhelmed him with consolations in the midst of his cruel sufferings. However, he felt his condition was getting worse, and fearing to lose the presence of mind necessary to receive well the Holy Rites of the Church, he eagerly asked for the Holy Viaticum. They immediately granted him this consolation.

When the Blessed Sacrament was brought to his chamber the Blessed Eudes, animated with a lively faith and profound humility, begged his infirmarians to help him to rise, and notwithstanding the remonstrances of those around him, he knelt down on the floor, and in this posture wished to receive his God for the last time. Assisted by two of his Brothers he commenced to make the honorable amends and reparation to our Lord for the innumerable sins that he said he had committed; made acts of resignation, abandonment of himself, and all his interests in his acceptance of death. He then asked pardon of all the members of his Congregation, present and absent, and wished them a thousand benedictions from our Lord and His holy Mother. All those around him were in tears at the sight of so much humility and fervor. It was only after all these acts were finished that he received the Holy Viaticum.

He was then put back in bed, and his thanksgiving was no less touching than his reparation. He occupied himself a long time in making acts of the most ardent love for Him he had the happiness of possessing in his heart, desiring, as he had often said, that all his respirations, and all the movements of his heart were acts of perfect love, and entire resignation to the will of God, of profound humility and of filial confidence in His Divine goodness.

The apostle of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary could not forget his good Mother. Turning towards her statue he said to her with the most tender confidence: *Maria, Mater gratiae* or *Monstra te esse Matrem.*

Wholly occupied as he was in his God and his eternity, his love for souls made him give some holy advice to his dear Daughters of Our Lady of Charity, and to the Carmelites, of whom he was the Father Superior. He sent word to the superiors recommending them to have particular care not to *sadden or allow the sick to be saddened.* His own experience made him comprehend the better how feeble the sick are usually, and how easy it is for a little thing to excite their passions, putting them in danger of committing sin, or of at least losing by impatience the merits of their sufferings. It was also a delicate way of inspiring these charitable sentiments in all his children, and of engraving them on their hearts, by sealing them with his dying wishes.

Feeling his weakness increasing the venerable old man asked to receive Extreme-Unction. With full knowledge and extraordinary fervor he himself responded to all the prayers of the Church. At each anointing he made an act of contrition for all the faults committed by that particular sense that had been anointed.

Then his ejaculatory prayers became more frequent still. He was heard to repeat: *Jesus meus et omnia*: my Jesus you are my all! *Dilectus meus mihi*: my Well-beloved is all in all to me!..*Unum volo, unum quaero, unum amo*: I wish only one thing, my God! I seek Him, I wish to love Him alone, for time and for eternity! All those who heard him pronounce these pious invocations, or others taken from the Holy Scriptures, felt moved to devotion by the holy unction with which he prayed in that supreme moment.

Learning that the last hour approached Madame de Camilly asked for the consolation of seeing him once more, and receive his last blessing. "Why do they not send her up?" replied this good Father. "Is she not my eldest daughter?" This pious and faithful friend in his good and evil days was deeply moved on seeing him a prey to such atrocious sufferings. But he consoled her himself, telling her he had the hope of soon seeing the end of his earthly sorrows, and receiving an eternal and magnificent recompense. She then fell on her knees to get his blessing for herself, and for her family, and begged of him to remember her when he would arrive in Paradise. He gave her his blessing, and added: "Oh, if the good God shows me mercy, and if I have some power with him, I will not leave you long here below after me!" This promise was realized three months later.

For the Blessed servant of God the fatal hour approached, and the nearer its approach the more his confidence and joy increased. Seeing his brethren around his bed in tears at the thought of losing their good Father, he said:

"Why do you weep, why do you weep, my Brothers? Is it not just that I pay nature the tribute that we all owe, that our fathers have paid, and from which penalty no one is exempt? You should rather rejoice that I am to be delivered from this valley of miseries, where I have wept so long, and that I am to go and enter into possession of those great things that are promised us, and prepared for us in heaven. It belongs only to pagans, and those bereft of hope of enjoying those eternal blessings, to afflict themselves at the loss of their friends and their property."

Thus this holy priest looked upon death, and wished that his brethren would also look upon it as the end of their miseries and the commencement of true happiness. At length he expired on Monday, August 19, 1680, at three o'clock in the afternoon, full of days, of virtues and good works.

His soul left the body without an effort, or even a slight convulsion, like a ripe fruit falling from the tree that bore it. Born on November 14, 1601, he was, then, seventy-eight years, nine months and five days old.

Those interesting details belong by right to this history. It was thus that the Blessed John Eudes, after having taught his daughters to live according to the Rules he gave them, and to live in an exceptionally holy manner, also taught them how to die well by his own grand example.

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CHAPTER XXV

BURIAL OF THE BLESSED J. EUDES—HIS TESTAMENT—SOME GRACES AND CURES OBTAINED IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS DEATH

THE news of their bereavement soon reached the Charity, and caused the deepest grief. To console themselves in this hour of sorrow the grateful Religious demanded his heart, saying that their good Father had bequeathed it to them; their demand was supported by a promise written and signed by his own hand:

> In the year 1678, on the 13th day of January, I bequeathed my heart to my well-beloved daughters in our Lord, the Religious of Our Lady of Charity, established at Caen, to be interred in their monastery. Such is my desire, and I wish it to be carried out. I beg the Fathers of our seminaries to attend to this.
>
> JOHN EUDES,
> *Missionary-Priest of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.*

Reverend P. Mannoury, the devoted auxiliary of the Blessed in the foundation of this Institute, upheld the request of the Sisters, by his influence. But Father Dufour, his secretary, and probably his confessor, since it was he who administered the Last Sacraments to him, would not even allow any deliberation on the question, and presented the following act revoking the former:

> I revoke the gift that I have made of my heart to the Religious of Our Lady of Charity, desiring that my body and my heart be buried together in our Church of the Most Amiable Heart of Jesus and Mary.
>
> JOHN EUDES,
> *Missionary-Priest of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.*
> Given at Caen, September 18, 1678.

To avoid being taken unawares by the curious, Father Dufour and Brother Richard, infirmarian to the Blessed for many years, locked themselves in the sacristy to enshroud the holy remains, and to keep it out of sight until it would be exposed to the veneration of the faithful.

It was on account of the secrecy kept regarding all these things, that when they opened his tomb at the end of the *Information of the Process of the Virtues*, there ensued the liveliest emotion among the commission or authorities, when, close to the venerated remains, they discovered three leaden boxes containing three hearts, without any indication to whom they belonged. They asked if one of them did not belong to the Blessed. Since his heart had not been separated from his body there was no reason to believe so. The recital of the translation of this precious deposit from the chapel of the seminary to the Church of Notre Dame relates, also, the transfer of the hearts of the Reverend F. Blouet and of two other Superiors-General. These were the hearts found by the tribunal.

Why did the Blessed change the first will that he made? We do not know. Father Costil, consulting an ancient tradition, said that it was on account of some trouble he had at the time. We find no trace that it had anything to do with the straightening out of the temporal affairs related in a foregoing chapter. This revocation was and is certainly very regrettable. The profound respect that the Community of Caen had always conserved for the memory of this good Father makes us quite certain that if he had not revoked it this precious deposit would have escaped the horrors of the Revolution, and would be now, and at the moment of the Beatification, exposed to the veneration of his children and of all the faithful. However, the Sisters kept safely, and as precious relics, the linen and pieces of the chausible that were given them as a consolation for the refusal of that which had been promised them by the Blessed, and so soon after revoked.

As has been said, shortly after his demise Reverend P. Dufour and Brother Richard clothed the body in the sacerdotal robes; they then placed it in a leaden coffin, and exposed it in the chapel of the seminary. According to Helyot, in his "History of the Religious Orders," the concourse of people that poured in to look upon the remains of this great servant of God was so considerable that it was very difficult to proceed with the ceremonies of burial. It was on account of this difficulty that they deferred it until the third day—that is to say, until Thursday.

It was Reverend M. Guilbert, parish priest of Notre Dame of Caen, Father Superior of the Sisters, who officiated, surrounded by a great number of clergy, and in presence of a multitude of people, as is related by Father Martine. According to the request of the pious deceased his body was deposited in the choir of the church of the new seminary.

In 1810 these venerated remains were transferred to the Church of Notre Dame of Caen, in the midst of a similar concourse of people. It was at that time that the Religious of Our Lady of Charity obtained a large part of the skull and the two tibias, with the reliquary that had been placed in the coffin. All these precious remains were recognized by apostolic authority on March 6-7, 1884. A long process-verbal, which took two days to compile, gave a detailed description of this ceremony. The portion deposited in Notre Dame is to be found near the altar of the Blessed Virgin on the epistle side, under the beautiful monument that was raised to his memory by his *own* children. The festivals that accompanied its erection made it an epoch-making time in the history of the city of Caen. The piety of that immense multitude could not have been greater. Having been a happy witness, we can affirm this.

After the funeral ceremonies were over, the testament of the Blessed founder was opened. Not because it was a model of Christian sentiments, which are always contained in such documents, that it merits to be published here; but the attentive reader will find herein a summing up of the beautiful life of its author. Articles 10 and 11 will, no doubt, fix his attention. The humble apostle of the Sacred Hearts would never have spoken in such positive terms, if he had not had special revelations on the subject. The tradition of these divine communications is conserved in his two Institutes. It was from it that the Christian artist, M. Valentine, was inspired to erect the group for his tomb. The Holy Virgin appeared to the Blessed who is shown in ecstacy at her feet; the Infant Jesus is carried on the right arm of His Mother, Who leans towards him, and shows him His Heart with His right hand, while with the left he points towards the Heart of Mary.

It was the same idea that the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Issoudun had made so popular under the title of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. A good proof of this is, that to give their devotion its liturgical expression they asked the Sacred Congregation of Rites for the Offices composed by the Blessed John Eudes. This authorization was easily granted them.

These articles of his testament indicate well the lively desire the Blessed Eudes had to see his children faithful to their vocation, and spreading around them, by every means in their power, the devotion of the Sacred Hearts. The sequel of this history will prove that the Religious of Our Lady of Charity have not failed in this beautiful mission.

TESTAMENT OF THE BLESSED FATHER EUDES.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and in honor and in union with the testament that my Jesus made on the last day of His mortal life on earth I make this testament for the glory of my God alone, in the form and in the manner that follows:

1. I give myself with all my heart to my Savior, and I unite myself to the most perfect faith of His most holy Mother, of His Apostles, of His saints, and of the whole Church; and in union with this faith I protest in the face of heaven and earth that I wish to die a child of the Holy Catholic, Roman and Apostolic Church, and in the firm belief of all the Christian truths that it teaches; I offer myself to God to suffer, aided by His grace, all torments imaginable and all deaths possible for this belief.

2. With all my heart I give myself to the infinite love, through which my Savior died for me and all men upon the tree of the cross, and in union with that love I accept and ebbrace death in the place and manner that He shall please to send it, in honor and in thanksgiving for the holy death of His most glorious Mother, supplicating Him by the Sacred Heart of this amiable Mother, and by His adorable Heart, broken and bruised for us with love and sorrow on the cross, to give me the grace to die in His love, by His love and for His love.

3. Prostrate at the feet of all my Brothers, and of every one to whom I have given any cause of discontent or disedification, I ask their pardon with my whole heart, supplicating them to pardon me for the love of our Lord, and to pray to Him for me that He may show me mercy.

4. With my whole heart I give myself to the immense charity that compelled my Savior, while hanging on the cross, to offer this prayer to His Eternal Father for those that crucified Him: *Pater, dimitte illis, non enim sciunt quid faciunt.* And in union with that same charity I say to my Celestial Father, from the depth of my heart, for all those who have of-

fended me in any manner whatever, *Pater, dimitte illis, non enim sciunt quid faciunt.*

5. I declare that I desire to receive Extreme-Unction and the Holy Viaticum, and I supplicate my very dear Brothers to have them administered while I have the use of my reason; I unite myself to all the holy dispositions with which the saints have received them; and if it should happen that I would be deprived of them, I beseech my most benign Redeemer to operate in me the effects of those Sacraments He instituted, and this for His own glory.

6. If it should happen that I lose my reason and my exterior senses, I consent with all my heart to all the acts of faith, hope, charity, humility, resignation, contrition and others that may be made for me, on earth, or in heaven, praying my very dear Brothers, my good Angel Saint Michael, Saint Gabriel, and all the other angels, Saint Joseph, Saint Joachim, Saint Anne, Saint John the Baptist, Saint John the Evangelist, Saint Lazarus, Saint Magdalen, Saint Martha, all the Holy Apostles, all the Holy Martyrs, all the Holy Priests, all the Holy Virgins, all the Holy Innocents, and all the saints of Paradise, and especially my Blessed Mother the Holy Virgin, to supply for my defects, to offer to my God all my duties and to make them most agreeable to His Divine Majesty, protesting also that every beat of my heart and every pulsation of the blood in my veins, and all my respirations be so many acts of contrition, resignation, of praise and of love towards my Creator and my Savior.

7. With my whole heart I give myself to the infinite love with which my Jesus gave up His soul to His Father, saying: *Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum.* I place myself in the most amiable Heart of Jesus and Mary, most ardent furnace of eternal love, supplicating them most humbly to fill, consume and transform me in the most pure flame of this divine love.

8. If I had my choice I would wish that my body be interred in our Church of Caen, consecrated to this same Heart of Jesus and Mary; but I abandon my body and soul to the Divine Will, willingly submitting myself to all that He may please to ordain for me for time and eternity; consenting with joy that my body be reduced to dust and that every grain of dust may be as so many acts of adoration and of praise for the burial of my Savior and of His most sacred Mother;

9. I supplicate my brethren to bury me in the white habit of my Blessed Mother, which comprises the cincture of white silk and the heart bearing a cross of red silk, as also with the aube that I have marked for that, with the holy scapular and the same holy Rosary that Sister Marie gave me, with the original of my testament of which I shall leave a copy, with the contract of alliance that I made with the Blessed Virgin, and especially with her holy image which is

made up partly with holy relics, and which is in a little niche of gilt copper.

10. With the whole extent of my will I give myself to the incomprehensible love by which my Savior and my good Mother have given me their most amiable Heart in a special manner, and in union with that same love I give this same heart, as *a thing which is mine, and of which I can dispose for the glory of my God;* I give it, I say, to the little Congregation of Jesus and Mary to be its portion, treasure, the principal portion, the heart, the life and the rule of the true children of this Congregation. I also give and dedicate this same Congregation to this Divine Heart, to be consecrated to His *honor and praise* for time and eternity; I supplicate and conjure my beloved Brothers to endeavor to celebrate the Feasts and Offices on the days that are marked in our Proper, with all the devotion they are capable of, and to preach on these subjects in *all their missions;* to study to imprint in their hearts a perfect image of the virtues of this Holy Heart, to look upon it and to follow it as the primitive rule of their life and their deportment, and to give themselves to Jesus and Mary in all their actions and exercises which they perform in the love, the humility and in all the other dispositions of their Sacred Heart, in order that by this means they may love and glorify God with a heart which is worthy of God, *corde magno et animo volenti,* and that they be according to the Heart of God, the true children of Jesus and Mary.

11. I also give this most precious Heart to my very dear daughters, the Religious of Our Lady of Charity and the Carmelites of Caen, and to all my other spiritual children, especially to those who may have a more particular affection for their unworthy Father, and whose names are written in the Book of Life; I give them all, each in particular, to this Sacred Heart for the intentions marked in the preceding article; and I promise them that if my Savior gives me that grace that I hope for from His infinite mercy, and the incomparable charity of His Blessed Mother, that I will have a particular care of them from the heights of heaven; and I hope that God will give me the grace to be able to assist them at the hour of their death, with this Holy Virgin.

12. Prostrate at the sacred Feet of my Jesus, Whom I adore as the Institutor, the Founder, the Superior and the Father of our Congregation, and likewise at the feet of the Queen of Heaven, whom I honor as the Institutress, the Foundress, the Superioress and Mother of this same Congregation, I supplicate them most humbly and most earnestly by their benign Heart, and I beseech all Paradise to intercede with me, that they may put a man in my place to govern who will be according to their Heart, who will make reparation for my innumerable faults, and that he may be conducted by their spirit; for I know the qualities and dispositions best

of the subjects of the Congregation, and I pray my very dear Brothers to take in a good way what I say to them, that there is no one better fitted in every way for this charge than is our very dear Brother. . . . . .

13. I pray them also to look upon the Rules and Constitutions that I have left them, not as something that comes from me, but as given them by the hands of our Lord and His Blessed Mother, that all the Offices and prayers that are in the Proper, and in the Manual of our Congregation, be observed and practiced exactly out of love for them; declaring to them that the Mother and the Son shall love them, shall protect and bless them in every way, and that they shall treat them in this world and in the next as true children of their Sacred Heart, but that they will not regard with this favor, neither in this life nor in the next, those who contemn or neglect these Constitutions or Offices, as children of their Congregation.

14. I bequeath my silver reliquary, which is in the shape of a heart, and which I am wearing, to the sacristy of our House of Caen, to be inseparably attached to the image of the most Holy Virgin which is exposed on the altar where her litanies are sung.

15. I give my crucifix, which is filled with holy relics, to him who shall succeed me, praying him to have the acts marked in *the Kingdom of Jesus* said every evening and every morning before the crucifix.

16. I leave him, also, the disposal of the other holy relics that I wear, and which he shall find in the little coffer which is near the window in my chamber that looks into the garden of the Jesuit Fathers, and the medals that are there and in the drawer of my table, all of which I give, through his hands, to those to whom he may distribute them.

17. I conjure him, and all my successors, not to fail to visit all the houses of the Congregation every year, either themselves or their delegates, and to observe all that is marked in the Constitutions.

18. I pray him, also, to issue an order that my sermons may not be thrown away, but to make a volume out of them, so as to keep them for the Congregation; and if any of the books remain, that I have written for the good of souls, to get them printed; and even to arrange it in such a way that all that I have written may be put in the same volume.

19. I beseech all the Superiors of the Congregation to study well and practice the Rules of their Office, to speak incessantly to their inferiors by their actions and by their example, and to guide them with all charity, sweetness and affability possible; and I conjure all the true children of the Congregation always to render their superiors the respect, affection and obedience that are due to those who hold the place of our Lord Jesus Christ; for on these two duties of superiors

and inferiors depend the conservation and the happiness of the Congregation.

20. Having received from our dear Brother Richard le Moine the greatest assistance in all my bodily needs, and for several years, I pray all my dear Brothers, especially he who shall succeed me, to have for him the same charity that they would have for me were I still in this world.

21. In fine, I give myself with my whole heart to my dear Jesus, and unite myself to all the holy dispositions with which He, His most holy Mother and all the saints have died, embracing for love of Him all the pains of body and mind that may be my portion in my last days, protesting to Him that I wish that my last sigh be an act of the most pure love for Him, and supplicating Him to accept and to conserve for the hour of my death all the acts of religion and of piety marked on this paper.

This is my testament, and I most humbly supplicate my dear Savior and His most Holy Mother, by their benign Heart, to be my executors, and to see that all of these articles be perfectly accomplished in the manner that may be most agreeable to the most Adorable Will of my God.

Amen, Amen, fiat! fiat! Veni, Veni, Veni, Domine Jesu!

JOHN EUDES,
Missionary-Priest of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

PARIS, April 24, 1671.

ADDITION.

In order not to seem extremely ungrateful in regard to my dear daughter in our Lord and my eldest daughter, Anne le Haguais—Lady de Camilly—whom our very dear Brother M. de Than had associated with him in the foundation of our House of Caen, and with good reason, for God gave to her the heart of a mother for the whole Congregation, especially for this house, for which she has done all the good that lay in her power, I supplicate all my very dear brothers to look upon her and honor her in this quality, and give during her life and after her death all that is due to the foundress and the mother of a Congregation, I leave her something that is very precious to me—a little image of the Blessed Virgin, which I wear on my neck in a little silver case, where there is also the true cross, which image has been given me on the part of the same Virgin, to mark the special alliance that she favored me with.

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

PARIS, May 1, 1672.

We can say that the reputation for sanctity, that followed in the wake of the Blessed during his lifetime, became much more general after his death among all Christians whom the errors of Jansenism had not corrupted. When the inhabitants of Caen learned of the death of the *Good Father Eudes,* as they called him, they cried out unanimously: *The Saint is dead!* But in no place was this reputation of sanctity more general or better understood than in Our Lady of Charity. Every new house carried away the precious relics. It is true that the Blessed was often pleased to recompense this fidelity to his memory by marvelous graces, true miracles which had they been canonically examined, would have served for his beatification.

The first thing of this kind happened during the fortnight that followed his death. Here is the recital of the fact given by Sister M. of Saint Paul le Poutrel, who received this favor:

> God willed, in order to manifest His glory and that of our worthy Father and institutor, to obtain for me this wonderful favor.
>
> I was born with an infirmity as humiliating as it was painful; I was, besides, very much incommoded by a very cold feeling through my kidneys, and I was so weak that I could not stand any work that was any way hard without feeling great inconvenience. After having consulted doctors, and used all the known remedies for one whole year, eight days after the death of our worthy Father our very dear Mother M. of the Infant Jesus de Dois-David, third superior of our House of Caen, was inspired to make a novena to our holy institutor, to whom I had much devotion . I promised to say in his honor, and in gratitude for the graces that God had given him, three *Paters,* three *Aves* and a *Salve Regina* to the most Holy Virgin that she would please to manifest the glory of her good and faithful servant. And before my novena was finished I was perfectly cured. Since that time I have never been inconvenienced, nor felt the cold, nor the weakness, nor pain of the kidneys. Furthermore, there appeared around the kidneys a cushion of flesh which gave me great strength. During my novena I felt that I should employ myself in doing the roughest work, and the most painful; the more I worked the stronger I became. I was then twenty-six years old.

When she wrote this attestation, Sister M. of Saint Paul was Superioress of Guingamp. In the same document she recalls the graces obtained, even during the life of the Blessed:

> This was not the only favor that I received from God, through the intercession of this good Father: After God, I

owe him the happiness of being a Religious. He obtained for me from our very dear Mother M. of the Blessed Sacrament Pierre permission to enter the Novitiate against the will of my parents, who afterwards gave their consent in a miraculous manner. It is to be desired, and it is my fervent wish that every one would know and acknowledge his merits, and the graces with which God has recompensed His servant, who has been a faithful steward. Many others would participate in such benefits if they would have recourse to his intercession.

This good Mother, doubtless, inspired all her Sisters of Guingamp with devotion to their Blessed founder, for the study of the archives of that monastery shows that veneration and devotion to him was well established there.

In Caen, on the feast of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin, another Religious was favored with a wonderful cure; it occurred one or two years after the death of the Blessed servant of God:

I was afflicted with some disease of the eyes that prevented me from being able to distinguish any objects. I greatly feared that this state was going to be permanent, and naturally my sorrow was very deep; indeed, too deep for expression, for I thought and feared it was to be total blindness that was to be my portion henceforth. However, knowing that it was the Hand of God that sent it I strove to submit myself to His Holy Will. Although resigned to suffer, the idea came to me like a flash to address myself to our worthy institutor, and ask, through his intercession, to be delivered from this awful calamity. But fearful that I was not sufficiently submissive under my affliction, I often renewed my act of conformity to the good pleasure of God, when one day this other thought presented itself to my mind: that if God wished to manifest on this occasion the power and glory of our good Father, I would be wrong if I resisted the inspiration that was sent me. I immediately addressed myself to him with childlike confidence, and I was cured almost at once; my eyes returned to their normal healthy condition, and I ever retained a certain impression of the eternal beatitude of my benefactor.

The protection of this good Father was at all times felt in the convents, but it was chiefly in favor of novices belonging to the two Institutes that he intervened, both as to their health and other exterior circumstances, such as the removal of the obstacles that threatened their vocation. We shall cite several examples of this kind.

The death of Madam de Camilly was unanimously regarded as a favor due to the intercession of her holy director, and an effect of the promise that he made her. We are assured that this noble Christian matron prayed at his tomb during the octave of his decease, and asked him for the grace of being soon delivered from the miseries of this life, and to take her to heaven after him. Feeling sure that she was heard she announced to several of her friends that she had not much longer to live. Three months later, on Saturday, November 16th, she confessed and communicated in the church of the seminary. Her health appeared to be very good, and there was nothing apparent that would indicate her approaching death. She was returning home when a poor person asked her for alms; she was in the act of bestowing when those that accompanied her saw her kneel down in the street, join her hands, raise her eyes to heaven, and in that humble posture, and in the exercise of charity, render her soul to her Creator without the slightest effort or contortion of expiring nature.

In her case we must say here in all humility that her death was worthy of her life. Such a life! such a death! The sixty-six years of her existence had been filled by works of charity. From the age of twenty-two, the time when she placed herself under the direction of the Blessed Eudes, she renounced the use of silken garments, and all other worldly pleasures, making every day new progerss in the ways of perfection. Neither ardities at prayer, nor habitual privation of all sensible consolation could discourage her or retard her progress. The thought of the judgments of God had always made a great impression on her soul; so this sudden but well-provided death was looked upon as a signal grace by all those that knew her. God spared her the anguish of a final struggle.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

THE HISTORY
OF
OUR LADY OF CHARITY

PART SECOND

From the Time of the Death of the Blessed
John Eudes to the Revolution

1680--1796

FIRST MONASTERY—CAEN

CHAPTER I

FEASTS AND CONFRATERNITIES OF THE SACRED HEARTS—BRIEF OF INDULGENCE—APPROBATION OF THE OFFICES—BULL OF INNOCENT XI ON THE AGE OF PROFESSION—CONSTRUCTION OF THE CHAPEL—THE WORKS OF THE MONASTERY—DEATHS OF REVEREND P. MANNOURY, MOTHER M. OF THE INFANT JESUS DE BOIS-DAVID AND SOME OTHER SISTERS

"HAPPY are the people who have no history," has been very justly said. It is a proof that life passed by in an uneventful manner, without those violent revolutions, those bloody wars that exercise the talent of historians, and whose sorrowful recitals increase the amount of their writings, and swell the volumes they are so eager to append their names to.

After the death of the Blessed John Eudes we can say that the Monasteries of Our Lady of Charity enjoyed peace and prosperity, which actuality almost suppressed history. When the difficulties inherent to every foundation were surmounted they developed with a wise slowness. Once the recital of their foundation was given their Annals contained very little save the examples of the virtues left by the Sisters. It was a slight movement, but very edifying. In analyzing the *Flowers* of the Order we shall strive to have the reader breathe some of the perfume.

First Monastery

We shall occupy ourselves with the monasteries in the order in which they were founded. Then we will continue the recital of that which concerns the first.

Two principal facts are related in the year 1681, the year following the death of the Blessed John Eudes. Up to that time the Sisters had not celebrated with solemnity the feast of the Holy Heart of Mary. External circumstances, and the refusal of their almoner, obliged them to be satisfied in keeping it quietly in the monastery, by singing hymns and canticles. It seems that before obtaining the grace of manifesting publicly their devotion it was necessary that they would have in heaven a powerful intercessor. Shortly after the demise of their saintly founder all obstacles disappeared, the almoner was changed, and Bishop de Nesmond granted all the permissions. The establishment of this feast was for the Sisters the occasion of redoubling their fervor. They prepared themselves by numerous exercises of piety and of mortification, and they met with a happy cooperation in their chaplains. To render more solemn the Offices of this beautiful day the chaplains invited a number of ecclesiastics, who sang to the accompaniment of music*.

The prohibition to receive novices to the profession before the age of twenty was a serious obstacle at that time to the growth of the Institute. It established between the Order of Our Lady of Charity and the other Orders a difference that seemed to indicate a kind of mistrust. Several young persons could and did make profession at the age of sixteen in the other monasteries. This seemed an inducement to those about to enter; they did not want to wait so long in incertitude, so they gave up the idea of entering the Order of Our Lady of Charity, giving the preference to the other Orders.

Mother M. of the Trinity, during her superiority at Guingamp, was the happy recipient of a brief from Pope Innocent XI, which raised this obstacle to the development of the Order. We give here the translation of this important document; we have adopted without any modification that which the Sisters were familiar with for a long time. In a note we place the

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*Extract from the Annals.—In the year 1680 they commenced in this monastery the devotion of the Holy Rosary, according to the method in existence today. Each one who composes this society draws one of the fifteen mysteries, to honor it particularly, and each one says the decade daily, to ask, through the intercession of the B. V. M., the grace of a happy death for the first of the Sisters who is to die; if the Community is numerous, they say several Rosaries every day for the same end; when a Sister dies they take care to replace her, so in turn each one receives the advantages of this association.

Latin text such as it was possible for us to procure. The privilege conferred by this Bull has been made use of to its full extent.

BULL OF POPE INNOCENT XI.

MAY 7, 1681

To serve as a memorial to posterity. The Religious of the Monastery of the House of the Refuge, called of *Our Lady of Charity* of the City of Caen, in the Diocese of Bayeux, having made a representation a long time ago to our predecessor Alexander VII, of happy memory, that in the year 1641 the said House of Refuge had been, with the consent of Louis XIII, of glorious memory, most Christian King of France, and with the permission and approbation of the Bishop of Bayeux, erected in the same city of Caen, situated in Normandy, and founded by the alms of the faithful, for the Religious to be called Our Lady of Charity, who would follow the Rule of Saint Augustine, to receive and instruct girls and women who had led a depraved life, and who wished to do penance. And fearing that those Religious would give up this good work, said Bishop had ordered as a matter of prudence that they would add to the three ordinary vows a fourth simple vow—to receive and instruct the said Penitents, and had enjoined them to demand from the Holy Apostolic See the confirmation or erection of their Institute, and the solemnity of the four vows. As was added in the same statement, that the said House of the Refuge would be established in due form as a monastery, with church, bell, cloister, court, cells, refectory, dormitory, cemetery, gardens and other dependencies proper to a dwelling for the said Religious and provided with an enclosure; that there be also a house contiguous, but, nevertheless, separate and distinct from their convent, to lodge the said girls and women that may be there, or who may enter; and, therefore, the said Alexander, our predecessor, having been humbly supplicated by the said Religious to approve and confirm the Institute and this monastery in the same manner as other Congregations of Virgins living under the Rule of Saint Augustine, established in different cities of the Kingdom of France, and approved, as we are assured, by the said Apostolic See, and in like manner approved and confirmed the Rule of this monastery, and the Constitutions prescribed to the same Religious by the Ordinary of Bayeux, with perpetual erection and institution of this monastery; hence, perpetual priory under the name of Priory of the Refuge of Our Lady of Charity, under the Rule of Saint Augustine, in which ladies of good moral character, girls and widows wishful of embracing this Institute, having attained the age of twenty years complete, and after having made two years of novitiate shall be obliged to make, besides the three essential vows, a fourth vow—to work according to their ability for the conversion, reception and instruction of girls and women who have led a bad life, and that it pleased the Holy See to grant to the said suppliants the Apostolic favors; the same Alexander, our predecessor, having regard to these requests, by the advice of the Cardinals of Holy Roman Church, which was then placed for consultation before the Bishops and the Regulars, the said monastery was approved and confirmed by the Apostolic authority, erected in the manner above-mentioned, and as their Rule and Institute expressed, and accorded by the same authority, to the same monastery or priory, to the prioress and to the Religious present and future, and to the penitent women who have entered and who shall enter, and to all servants present and future, who shall be in said monastery or priory the free and licit enjoyment of all and every privilege, exemptions, liberties, immunities, powers, indults and graces, spiritual as well as temporal, which have been to the present and shall be granted in any manner to the prioresses and Religious, to the penitent women and to those persons who serve the other congregations and monasteries of Religious of this Institute established in those places and in the surrounding provinces, and that not only similarly but principally, and in such form as is contained more amply in the letters of the same Alexander VII, our predecessor, forwarded on this subject in a like form of brief dated January 2, 1666, expressed by these presents.

But as our dear daughters in Jesus Christ, the Religious of the said monastery or priory, have represented to Us, that other monasteries of Religious of the same Institute have been erected in the cities of Rennes, Guingamp and Hennebont, in the dioceses of Rennes, Treguyer and Vannes, and that with the blessing of God this Institute, whose usefulness is well known, and is more recommendable on account of the good works performed there, and the numerous conversions of girls and women that are the result of their labors, could be even more extensive; that, however, they meet with an obstacle to this betterment and growth—that is, on account of the age prescribed for profession being twenty years, as it is said above, before making the four vows; many young girls would like to enter the monasteries, but they do not wish to wait so long before pronouncing their vows, preferring to enter those other monasteries, where they are allowed to make profession at sixteen years of age, according to the decrees of the Council of Trent. On account of this, the said exponents humbly supplicate Us, through our Apostolic goodness and power, to grant them the favors accorded to others.

We then, wishing to grant special graces and favors to the said exponents, do by the tenor of these presents, absolve and declare absolved, each of them in particular from all excommunication, suspense, interdict and other ecclesiastical sentences, censures and penalties, *a jure vel ab homine,* on whatever occasion or from whatever cause, if they have incurred any; and having regard to the said requests, by the advice of our venerable Brothers, the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, Interpreters of the Council of Trent, and having respect to the relation of our venerable Brother, the Bishop of Bayeux, concerning the things aforesaid, which have been submitted to the same Cardinals, We accord and permit by the tenor of these presents and of the authority aforesaid, that the religious novices, present and future, in all the monasteries already erected, or that shall be erected throughout the Institute, may expressly, freely, licitly and validly make their religious profression of four vows, when they have completed their seventeenth year, provided that all requirements be observed, in such a manner, nevertheless, that the said letters of Alexander, our predecessor, remain the same in all other things laid down, and that each should be observed inviolably.

We ordain that the present letters remain always in force, be constant, valid and efficacious, and that they have their full and entire effect in favor of those whom they regard in all and everything; and that all judges ordinary or delegated, even the Auditors of the Causes of the Apostolic Palace, so judge and define; and that whatever may be done or attempted to the contrary in these matters, knowingly or ignorantly, by any authority whatsoever, notwithstanding the said letters of Alexander, our predecessor, and all things general and particular that have been declared in the said letters, not being prejudicial, all things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at Rome, at Saint Peter's, under the seal of the Fisherman's Ring, the seventh of May in the year one thousand six hundred and eighty-one, and the fifth year of our Pontificate. Signed: J. G. FLUVIUS.*

From the moment of her installation the Community continued to occupy the first buildings such as they were, after they got what was absolutely indispensable. It would be difficult to imagine a more poverty-stricken place for the dwelling of refined ladies. Twenty Sisters had cells, sixteen slept in the same room, several in apartments where there was a mud floor. Bishop de Nesmond and Mother Herson were of the same opinion; they were opposed to building anything until the monastery could do so without too much constraint. When that time arrived the prelate wanted to build, first of all, a kitchen, a refectory and dormitories. The Mother desired to commence by building a chapel. Guided by a principal of faith, she said: "When we have given a suitable lodging to our Lord, it will be time enough to think of ourselves." This little contest of wills retarded the whole work.

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*We omit here the Latin text.

At length Bishop de Nesmond permitted them to enlarge the choir for the Religious, where only half of the Sisters could place themselves. The work was hardly commenced, when all the friends of the house declared that it would be useless, because it was not going to be large enough. Their eagerness ended by obtaining from the prelate the permission to build a chapel. The plan adopted was a very simple one: it was to be built in the form of a cross, about twenty-seven metres in length by eight in width to the extremities, and fourteen metres in the arms or side aisles. On the Epistle side there was a door opening into the choir for the Religious. It was fifteen metres in length by seven in width. Below the arm of the cross was the choir of the Penitents. On account of the great number received in the house at that time they placed tribunes or galleries above the choir, which gave each class a separate place, and quite roomy. Back of the high altar were the sacristies for the priests and Sisters.

Reverend P. Mannoury had the honor of blessing the foundation stone. After his life of devotedness to the welfare of the house this token of gratitude was certainly due to him. It was the Marchioness of Bois-David, sister-in-law of the Reverend Mother Superior, who laid the first stone. The first stone of the cloister buildings was laid by Mother M. of the Infant Jesus, herself, in the wall that separated the sacristy of the priests from the cloister. The church had been dedicated at that time to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

The building was hurried on, and on August 19, 1683, third anniversary of the death of the Blessed founder, the cross was raised on the chapel. However, it was not until the feast of the Purification, February 2, 1685, that the Bishop blessed and dedicated it for Divine worship. The day appeared to have been providentially chosen, since so many souls came that holy place to be restored, after losing their purity.

On the Sunday following, February 4th, the young Sister M. of Saint Catherine Blouet de Camilly, granddaughter of Madame de Camilly, offered to the Lord the sacrifice of herself by pronouncing her vows. Having become superior in 1709, she had this church solemnly consecrated by her brother, the Right Reverend Bishop of Toul, later Archbishop of Tours.

The main altar was dedicated to the Sacred Hearts; the chapel to the right was dedicated to the Holy Family. This was in conformity with the spirit of the Blessed Eudes, which sacred group he gave as a model to his Communities. The chapel to the left was consecrated to Saint Francis de Sales, being the first legislator of the Institute.

During the work of construction Mother M. of the Infant Jesus, having been besought by the domestics of Mme. de Bois-David to allow them to enter into the monastery under the pretext of helping their mistress or aiding her in the garden, without reflection had the weakness to consent. The Father Superior, having been notified by somebody, came and informed her that such entrances were contrary to the Constitution on the Cloister, and to Enclosure. This good Mother, recognizing the wrong she had done, left the whole Institute the good example of humility. She assembled the Chapter, and going on her knees before the seat where she was accustomed to sit, asked pardon of the Community for the scandal she had given. Her words expressed such lively regret that many of the Sisters could not restrain tears.

After the chapel was finished Mother M. of the Nativity was reelected for a second triennial, and prepared a plan for the building of a kitchen, refectory and dormitories. Before doing this it was necessary, first, to raze the old buildings that served for these purposes. It is easy to imagine the trouble and anxiety of the Community during the twenty-two months this condition lasted, according to the Annals. During all that time the Sisters ate on their knees in the Community hall.

Around that time, 1686, one of the almoners of the monastery, Reverend M. Lemercier, died. Notwithstanding his severity he had succeeded in regaining the esteem and confidence of the Sisters. Reverend M. Heurtant, second chaplain, replaced him. We are not told if he was any relation to the Mother Superior of Guingamp, as she bore the same name, but he showed great zeal in honoring the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and giving to those feasts all due solemnity. This change gives us some little knowledge regarding the clergy that served the convent. There were two chaplains, one for the Religious and the other for the Penitents. The personnel of the monastery was not much more than a hundred.

The following year, 1687, the most faithful and most useful of the cooperators of the Blessed Eudes in the foundation of the Order of Our Lady of Charity, Reverend P. Mannoury, passed to his eternal reward. He was born in the parish of Mesnil-Mauget, in the diocese of Lisieux. At the end of his studies at Caen he brilliantly won the degree of Doctor of Theology. It was after gaining this honor that the family of the De Camilly confided to him the education of their children. His piety became so well known that for eighteen years he enjoyed this mark of their confidence. It was in that holy house that he often met the Blessed John Eudes. He became initiated into all his ideas, his projects, and his many great deeds for God's glory, and he grew submissive and, as it were, the right-hand man of this zealous missionary. Twice the Blessed Eudes sent him to Rome to get the approbation of the Holy See for his two Institutes. It would be difficult for us today to comprehend the fatigue of such a journey. Reverend P. Mannoury made the most of it on foot; no modern conveyances helped to make travel pleasant, or at least commodious, as they do today.

Very often this Father took part in the apostolic labors of his superior, and helped him in several of his celebrated missions. One of his letters gives us an idea of his perfect obedience.

> "I can see very well," he wrote to one of his companions, "by the letter of our good Father, that I am not worthy to be his companion, nor to labor in the missions, since he does not wish me to, for he ordered me to return as soon as I arrived there. Oh, well, blessed be God! I only wish what he wishes who takes God's place in my regard. Ask Him for me, my very dear Brother, the grace of entire conformity to His Divine Will, and to that of my superiors, without having any regard to mine."

His zeal for the salvation of souls was equaled only by his ardor in pursuing and effecting the destruction of self-love within his breast. One of his maxims was, that on the complete destruction of self-love depended the good that evangelical workmen would and could do for souls. The object of his exhortations was to cement mutual peace and charity. He had great need of those two virtues in the government of the Seminaries of Evreux and Lisieux, of which he had charge for many years. The Bishop of Lisieux had him for his Vicar-General for nine years, and gave him the office of Superior of all the Religious Houses in his diocese. In the midst of so many occupations, and the difficulties incident to them, Reverend P. Mannoury preserved an unruffled temper, a sweet graciousness and a gentle simplicity that astonished all those who had recourse to him. One of his brethren so remarked to him one day. He replied laughingly: "That should not surprise you, my good Brother; I have not half as much trouble as you suppose; I am so accustomed to work; besides, I serve a good Master, of Whom it is written: *'Proposito sibi gaudio, sustinuit crucem, confusione contempta.'* 'Joy being proposed to Him, He took the cross, despising the shame.'"

On another occasion another Father received an avowal from him which, coming as it did from a man of such sincerity, showed to what a degree of virtue Reverend P. Mannoury had attained. He said very frankly: "I can assure you that I cannot remember having lost one half hour in forty years." His confessor acknowledged later that for several years he had not found in his confessions sufficient matter for absolution. His death was precious in the sight of God. It took place on March 13, 1687. He was seventy-four years old. He was the last of the earthly companions of the Blessed John Eudes. His residence at Lisieux for several years explains why his name is not mixed up in the history of Our Lady of Charity at the end of his life. In order to bless the foundation stone of the chapel he probably had to make the journey from Lisieux to Caen. The whole Order of Our Lady of Charity owes great respect to his memory.

In 1692 Reverend M. Le Grand made the regular visit to the monastery. In his conferences he applied himself to inspire humility in the Sisters, and exhorted them to receive willingly and take in good part the warnings that the Mother Superior found necessary to give them publicly in Chapter. He also insisted on cultivating politeness among themselves.

A curious lawsuit was taken up that same year against the monastery by a wicked penitent. The Sisters kept some of her effects to compensate themselves for her board, which had not been paid. She summoned the Sisters before all the legal authorities with a satanic ability. The loss that was occasioned the convent by this interminable lawsuit was more than 7,500 livres. Happily, the Sisters gained the victory, and the expense on their own account amounted to about six hundred livres. After reading of this unseemly affair, the wisdom of the founder, forbidding lawsuits, becomes very evident.

The following year, 1693, permission to celebrate the feast of the Divine Heart of Jesus was granted the Community. Bishop de Nesmond did not wish to yield until after repeated solicitations of the daughters of the first apostle of the beautiful devotion. The houses of more recent date of foundation had been more favored in this regard. This happy news was not received until some days before the feast, so the Sisters had no time to study the Office, and were obliged to forego that happiness for that year.

But the next year, as if to indemnify themselves for this enforced privation, the Sisters recited the Office with the nine lessons, not only on the day of the feast, but also during the whole octave. This custom was continued for some time; on account of too many difficulties it had to be discontinued later on. It seems it was necessary to extract the lessons from the Roman Breviary, which was not often practicable; besides, the length of those Offices interfered with their household employments. So after mature deliberation it was decided that during the octave the Sisters would only say the Little Office of the Holy Heart of Mary, which had been composed by Reverend P. Mannoury for the use of the students of the College of Lisieux. This Father, so well versed in all that concerned the Order, had previously given this counsel to the Sisters.

Under the administration of Mother M. of Saint Isidore Hellouin, in 1705, there was an unsuccessful attempt made to take up the recitation of the Grand Office, but it was found impracticable. The Breviary proper to the Order was printed at that time. In those Hours we find contained the Offices of the Sacred Hearts that were composed by the Blessed Eudes; they are recited on the days consecrated to their honor; as for the Office said during the octave the Sisters make use of the Little Office, taken entirely from the first Offices. That of the Holy Heart of Mary was arranged by Reverend P. Lampiere, professor of the Seminary of Caen; the name of the priest who arranged the Little Office of the Divine Heart of Jesus has not come down to us. These Offices were approved by five theologians of the Faculty of Caen. The Sisters also asked the sanction of Bishop de Nesmond, but this prelate made only the following reply, through Reverend M. Amey, later on the Father Superior of the monastery:

> *Madame*—I have been commissioned by the Right Reverend Bishop de Nesmond to supervise the printing of the Hours of the Office, and to see that everything be satisfactorily attended to, as the Bishop is extremely busy with the many duties of his high office, and therefore could not properly attend to this work personally. I asked him to give his sanction to the Hours, but he, after discussing the matter with his grand vicar, concluded that these same Hours contain nothing for approval or disapproval; therefore, no new sanction is required. He instructed me to say that you have his permission to continue to celebrate the holy Offices for the octaves of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, which are found in those books. I have read these Hours, and I find nothing in them contrary to faith; I particularly remarked that these Offices are replete with an unction capable of inspiring one with the knowledge of the mysteries of our redemption, and of filling all hearts with the fire of Divine love. We cannot read them without recognizing the piety and zeal of the Reverend P. Eudes, your institutor, who always evidenced an ardent desire of procuring God's glory and the salvation of souls. I am very glad that you make it the object of your zeal, and wish to be ever united with you in the Holy and Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Madame,
>
> Your very humble and obedient servant,
>
> AMEY.
>
> BAYEUX, June 18, 1708.

We considered the reproduction of this letter useful, in order to prove that the little Offices in use among the Sisters have been taken from the Grand Office, and to show the piety and unction of the Blessed author in introducing that form of prayer, and finally, to make known the veneration that the good priests of the diocese entertained for his memory.

Later on the Sisters wished to have an authentic document on this matter, and obtained from the Right Reverend Bishop de Luynes the following sanction:

> We have approved the present book, called the Hours of the Office, for the use of the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity of Caen, and have found contained in them the Grand and Little Office of the Divine Heart of Jesus and the Holy Heart of Mary and it is with pleasure that we approve the recital

of these Offices in the said monastery; looking upon this devotion as an efficacious means for drawing down all sorts of graces and blessings on the Religious of this monastery.

We understand that when the said Religious recite in choir the said Offices of the day of the feasts of the Divine Heart of Jesus and of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and during the octaves of those feasts they satisfy thereby the obligation of the Divine Office.

PAUL, *Bishop of Bayeux.*

CAEN, June 1, 1737.

In the Order of Our Lady of Charity they make use of three different kinds of Offices of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary: One Office has nine lessons for the day of the feast, and an Office of three lessons, taken from the first, and finally, a Little Office for the use of the Lay-Sisters. The Little Office of the Holy Heart of Mary is from the Blessed Eudes, for by the Constitutions of 1670 the recital of it was imposed already on those Sisters. Without being able to affirm it, we think it is the same as that of the Divine Heart of Jesus, which the Houses of Rennes, Hennebont and Guingamp had adopted from their foundation, and before the death of the institutor. They made a French translation of those beautiful prayers in Caen, which seemed very useful, and it was sent around to many of the monasteries. We know that the daily recitation of it produced great fruit, many graces, and a special benediction appeared to have been attached to its recitation.

All these Offices were approved by the Sacred Congregation of Rites, by a Brief dated June 13, 1861; this approval was extended even to the Little Office in use among the Lay-Sisters, for being understood or comprised in the first, they participated in the approbation.*

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*Latin decree not given here.

Translation of these decrees:

On the presentation of the undersigned, secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, having regard to the long space of time since the Religious of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge have had the custom of reciting the aforesaid Offices, examined and corrected by Us, as well as the Masses for those feasts; considering the approbation of June 2, 1668, given by Cardinal de Vendome, of illustrious memory, Legate *a Latere* for France, in the name of Pope Clement IX, our very Holy Father and Lord Pius IX Pope, deferring with benevolence to the wishes and supplications of the aforesaid Religious, and on the recommendation and special assistance of the Right Reverend Bishop of Bayeux, has granted to the suppliants the faculty and power henceforth to recite the said Offices, such as they are shown in the copy that preceded this decree, and such as have been examined and corrected by the Sacred Congregation of Rites, conceding to the priests who shall celebrate the Holy Sacrifice in the church or chapel of the said Religious, the authorization of reading and singing the Masses corresponding to those Offices, without retrencring the Proses—provided always that the Rubrics are observed.

Given, notwithstanding all that may be to the contrary and opposed to this favor, this 13th day of June, 1861.

C. PATRIZZI.

Saying that on account of the zeal of the Sisters in propagating this beautiful devotion Pope Innocent XII caused the erection of a Confraternity in honor of the Sacred Hearts. There are several plenary and partial indulgences granted by that Brief. Although it was more than twenty-five years after those obtained by the Blessed Eudes himself, it is still one of the oldest granted by the Holy See, and on account of this it belongs to the history of the devotion to the Sacred Hearts, as the reader will find in first note below.

The third decree, which we shall not translate, granted the same favor to the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. Several similar rescripts have been given, which show that the other religious societies were granted these same Offices, like the Fathers of the Sacred Heart of Issoudun. It does not, then, appear too bold to hope that after the canonization of the Blessed servant of God, they will be adopted by the whole Church. In any case, the holiness of their author being proclaimed, they will be more willingly adopted.

However, even after getting possession of this Brief, the joy of the Sisters was not complete, for Bishop de Nesmond would not permit any one that was an inmate of the convent to be enrolled in this Confraternity. Bishop de Loraine, his successor, notwithstanding his ardor in spreading and protecting Jansenism, was much broader in his views; for in direct contradiction with his doctrines, which combated the devotion to the Sacred Hearts, he easily permitted them to have every one, who so desired it, inscribed as members of the Confraternity.

The respect and love at the present time for all that concerns the ancient traditions, make the almoners profit by every means that would give new life to this old confrere.

This decree is placed on the last page of the copy of the same Office, in which there is no correction save that indicated by the words put in regard to the preceding Latin text, and which is found in the commencement of the prayer of the Office and of the Mass of the Most Pure Heart of the Blessed Virgin.

(2) DECREE FOR THE EXTENSION OF THIS FAVOR TO ALL THE MONASTERIES.

Rene-Marie-Charles Poirier, of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, Bishop of Roseau, delegated by the Religious of the Order of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge, humbly prostrate at the feet of your Holiness, supplicate you to deign in your goodness to accord to all the monasteries of the said Order the extension of the Offices Proper with the Masses, corresponding to those same feasts, which the Sacred Congregation of Rites, by decree of June 13, 1861, has revised, put in order and approved for the Religious of the same Order, in the diocese of Bayeux; see that these are common to all the monasteries of the said Order, and in all things similar.

Audience with the Holy Father obtained September 5, 1861.

Our Most Holy Father and Lord Pius IX, by Divine Providence Pope, on my presentation, the undersigned Cardinal, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, has had the goodness to grant the favor solicited in accordance with the petition.

Given at Rome in the Palace of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, the day and year above said.

Gratuitously and without any compensation that might be given.

AL. C. BARNABO, *Prefect.*

Death snatched away in 1696 Reverend M. Heurtant, who had for nine years exercised the functions of almoner in the convent. He died in the odor of sanctity, and founded several Masses in the chapel. His religious spirit was very remarkable; he also had great enthusiasm for the proper method of singing. He often assembled the Community to teach the art; they owed him much for this service, as it gave an added solemnity to the Offices. He was replaced by Reverend M. Coquerel, a very worthy priest and eminently capable of fulfilling those functions. Unfortunately during the last years he spent among them he fell into scrupulosity, and his direction kept the Sisters away from the Sacraments. Mother M. of Saint Isidore Hellouin brought the matter before Reverend P. Herambourg, then Vicar-General of Coutances, and first historian of the Blessed John Eudes. This Father, so well versed in ascetic matters, gave him decisive advice, perfectly in keeping with the doctrine of Saint Theresa, and said to him: "A Community would have less to fear in regard to a vicious confessor than in regard to one that is scrupulous." However, he fulfilled the functions of almoner for fourteen years.

The Annals give some information concerning the works of charity accomplished at that time in the monastery. By order of Louis XIV they were obliged to receive four young Huguenot ladies. After the closing of their temple, by the edict of Nantes, these four sisters had opened their house,

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TRANSLATION OF THE BRIEF OF POPE INNOCENT XII.

For a perpetual Memorial. Having learned that in the church of the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity of Caen, diocese of Bayeux, there is a pious and devout Confraternity of faithful Christians, canonically erected under the invocation of the Sacred Hearts of Our Lord Jesus Christ and of the Glorious Virgin Mary for all sorts of persons of whatsoever condition, which Confraternity and Sisters have the custom of exercising several works of piety and charity; finally, this Confraternity increasing daily, We, supported by the mercy of the All-Powerful God, and on the authority of the Blessed Apostles Saint Peter and Saint Paul, mercifully grant in our Lord, to all the faithful of both sexes, who may enter the said Confraternity, if they are truly penitent, and having confessed their sins and having received the Sacrament of the Eucharist on the first day of their entrance. (*Plenary Indulgence.*)

And to the same Confraternity and Sisters who are, or shall be receeived in said Confraternity, at the moment of death to each one in particular, if they are truly penitent, and having confessed and communicated, or in case they cannot satisfy these obligations, being contrite, they invoke devoutly with their lips if they can, or at least in their heart the Holy Name of Jesus. (*Plenary Indulgence.*)

We grant also to the same Confraternity and Sisters, who are enrolled in said Confraternity, provided they are truly penitent, having confessed and communicated, shall visit every year the church, chapel or oratory where the said Confraternity is established, on the 20th day of the month of October from the first Vespers, until sundown of the said day, while praying devoutly for union between Christian princes, for the extirpation of all heresies and for the exaltation of our Holy Mother the Church. (*Plenary Indulgence.*)

Furthermore, We grant to the same Confraternities and Sisters, being truly penitent, having confessed and communicated, who will visit said church, chapel or oratory on the 8th day of February, and three other days of the year, be it a feast day or not, or even a Sunday, whichever may be chosen by the Confraternities, and approved by the Ordinary, which days being once chosen and approved may not be subject to to be used for meeting-house for their Huguenot friends. The partisans of liberty of worship cried out against this intolerance, on seeing them immured in a convent, for the violation of this edict, but before accusing the King, they could not forget the abominable crimes of the Protestants the [illegible] they left in France, and especially the examples of [illegible] intolerance which they showed from the first. Besides, intolerance is traditionary among all the sects, and the Free Masons, perpetual impeachers of the church, are shunned less than all the others. The massacres or rather the revolutionary murders of 1793 and 1871 are proofs of their work. To be more hypocritical in our days is not being more tolerant. A crowd of impious lawyers and villians superabound. For Louis XIV only proposed to defend and protect the unity of his government, which was for the defense of religion. Today it is hatred of religion that actuates them.

Be that as it may, these ardent Huguenots became the objects of many heroic acts of charity. To obtain their voluntary return to the Truth the Community imposed upon themselves mortification of all kinds. The most *celebrated controversialists* of Caen could not succeed in persuading them; then Sister M. of Saint Isidore Hellouin undertook the task. Before discussing the subject with them this fervent catechist passed long hours before the Blessed Sacrament. As her work did not advance, and finding them bigoted in their belief, she solicited permission of Mother De Bois-David to

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change; and in said church they shall pray devoutly as aforesaid; each day they shall accomplish these actions. (*Seven years and seven quarantines.*)

Every time that the said Confraternities and Sisters shall assist at the Masses and other Offices that may be celebrated and recited in the said church, chapel or oratory, they shall strive in those public or private assemblies to benefit the said Confraternity, wherever the members are; they shall harbor the poor; they shall terminate differences, procuring peace and reconciliation between those at enmity; they shall assist in burying the dead, be it among the members of the Confraternity or the Sisters or others; they shall accommpany processions that are made with the permission of the Ordinary, or accompany the Blessed Sacrament to the sick or otherwise; or if they cannot go, on hearing the sound of the bell, they should say the Our Father and Hail Mary once; they shall recite five times the *Pater* and *Ave* for the repose of the souls of the deceased members of the Confraternity and the Sisters; finally, they should always do something to bring souls nearer to God; they shall practice some other work of piety and charity, and We shall remit to them, for each of these works, *sixty days of penance.*

These presents are granted in perpetuity.

Given at Saint Mary Major under the seal of the Fisherman's Ring, this tenth day of November, one thousand six hundred and ninety-nine, and of our Pontificate the ninth year. CARDINAL ALBANUS.

At the bottom of this Brief is written the Approbation of his Lordship Right Reverend Bishop de Loraine, in these terms:

We have seen and approved the present Brief of Indulgences in perpetuity; have permitted it to be published for the future according to the tenor of same, and have also approved the gaining of the three indulgences of seven years and seven quarantines on the days left to the choice of the members, the feasts of the Annunciation, the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of the Glorious Virgin Mary.

In the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and twenty, the tenth day of June. FRANCIS-ARMAND DE LORAINE, *Bishop of Bayeux.*

perform all that God would inspire her for their salvation. Having obtained this permission, with much difficulty, she associated nine of the most generous among the Sisters with herself, and together they commenced a novena of terrible mortifications, fasts on bread and water, bloody disciplines . . . . . The last day they prolonged their prayers before the Blessed Sacrament until midnight and they were joined by many other Sisters.

So much zeal obtained only one conversion. She who had the courage to abjure, related that often after the instructions, the four sisters said to each other: "The Mother spoke truly on that article. We must take good care not to acknowledge it to her." They made all the objections and replies they could think of.

The day after the novena they remarked to Sister M. of the Ascension Tinar that there were strange thoughts, fancies and ideas passing in their minds. Notwithstanding these disinterested and persevering efforts the other three never wished to open their eyes to the falsity of their errors; they practically ignored the other sister.

Among the Penitents marvelous conversions occurred occasionally, consoling the Sisters for the hard-heartedness of those poor blinded girls. Several young persons of noble birth, forgetting the delicacy of their first education, gave themselves up to mortifications that would appear excessive if they had not been inspired with the true spirit of penance. The perseverance with which they continued thus for long years is, perhaps, more admirable still. They went back to their families, only to edify them by their solid virtues. At that time the monastery was in the habit of returning them to their parents, or placing them in some good home—that is, when they were satisfied that their conversion was permanent.

Mother M. of the Infant Jesus died during the last term of the superiority of Mother M. of the Nativity. For nearly thirty years they successively governed the Community, and both, with their different qualifications, rendered great services.

The reader is already acquainted with the edifying childhood of Mother de Bois-David. We shall add only the following touches to it.

Entering, a little child of ten years, as a boarder, she had the happiness of being prepared for her First Communion by the Blessed Eudes, himself. He made her follow the exercises that he prescribed in his book: *The Life and Kingdom of Jesus.* This good Father heard her general confession. The qualities that he discovered in his little penitent appeared to him very remarkable; on account of those qualities it gave him great pleasure to cultivate the garden of her soul, and this he did with the utmost care. He tenderly called her his spiritual daughter, and considered it an immense happiness to teach her how to make acts of love to our Lord and His Holy Mother. His freedom from all flattery and human affection did not hinder him from always showing a particular esteem and kindness towards her.

Mother Patin had also an unbounded idea of her good judgment, and esteemed her highly. The discretion of the young girl was so marked that Mother Patin did not hesitate to confide to her the most important letters that had to be written. It was she that copied the Constitutions and the Custom Book before they were printed; naturally, she knew them almost by heart. This knowledge was of eminent service to her in after life, as she had a thorough understanding of the observances. But the care she took not to command anything she did not do herself was her best method of acting; it was sufficient for her to know a thing had to be done, and it was accomplished.

Her unceasing charity for her Sisters, and the attention she gave to all that concerned their spiritual and corporal necessities, was boundless; no one ever approached her without feeling a sense of her fitness for her office of Mother. Her intimate knowledge of their wants seemed at times to have been supernatural. One day a novice was battling with a temptation against her vocation; she even went so far in yielding to this ruse of the devil that she persuaded herself that the opposition her family showed to her profession was a direct proof that God did not want her to be a Religious. The temptation overcame her completely, and she resolved to demand her dismissal; just then the Mother Superior sent for her, exposed all her thoughts to her—every trouble she had instinctively hid was now laid bare before her—and the good Mother exhorted her not to resist the Will of God, adding: "I have laid this matter before God, although you have not spoken to me about it, and be sure, my dear Sister, that you cannot, without being very unfaithful to grace, give up your holy vocation." This positive assurance made such an impression on the young novice that from that moment her temptations ceased.

This was renewed several times, though under different circumstances. Another novice was so frightened by the grave obligations she would assume in making her vows that, on the eve of her profession, she thought she could not accomplish the task as it was laid before her, and that for an indefinite time such as the long life-time that might yet be hers; she went to Mother M. of the Infant Jesus to make known to her the fears that assailed her. The encouraging words addressed her by this good Mother were so efficacious that the frightened novice offered to God her sacrifice the following day with the keenest joy and delight.

God gave to this remarkable superior many other qualifications proper to endear her to all her Sisters, and by her fidelity in cultivating these necessary acquirements she daily became more perfect. In the midst of her absorbing occupations she was always ready to receive and comfort her Sisters. When she was obliged to refuse a request, it was because it was impossible to grant it; in this case she often said: "My dear Sister, I am obliged to mortify you in this, but I assure you that in doing so I am obliged to mortify myself first. If I were to follow my own inclination I would refuse you nothing, but I must obey God. You would be sorry yourself were I to grant your request through purely human motives." It is not astonishing that so good a superior, and one guided by such principles and supernatural motives, would have to guard against too great attachment on the part of her Sisters. If she noticed that their affection became too sensible she reproved severely those who showed it to her, and deemed herself as guilty of an imperfection much at variance with her obligation of bringing others to love and adore the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The Divine Worship was the principal object of the zeal of Mother de Bois-David. We can truly say that she inherited from the Blessed founder his ardent religious spirit. Her respect for all the ceremonies of the Church, for the Sacraments and for all the mysteries of our holy religion, was unbounded. Her tender faith and piety rendered her very eloquent when she spoke to the Sisters.

Some of them wished to take down some notes on her

Chapters, but the humble superior perceiving it absolutely forbade it. It is a great loss, for the short account we have regarding her proves that when she spoke of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, the recollection of the pious apostle and holy founder was very vivid; in fact, the Community could imagine they heard his living accents. We have seen that she had the consolation of celebrating the two feasts in the monastery, being then in charge.

Sad family misfortunes—the exile of her eldest brother, the death of another—and considerable losses occasioned the Community, furnished her with opportunities of showing her submission to the Will of God. One day during recreation she received very painful news of a singular process begun against the Community by a former Penitent. She opened the letter, and only remarked after reading it: "God is there; we must be quiet." And she continued the recreation. The Annalist adds: "She always sang the same canticle in prosperity and in adversity, blessing God in the midst of all sorts of events, like the holy man Job, who had been given to her as protector at the time of her holy profession."

Brought up far from the world, Mother M. of the Infant Jesus found in her religious enclosure a protection for her purity. With the permission of Reverend Mother Patin she made a vow of chastity, while still very young, at first for one month; then for one year, and soon it was forever. She guarded this virtue all her life with a delicacy that belonged to the greatest saints. One day while visiting with one of her friends in the parlor the friend showed her a portrait of herself, asking Mother M. of the Infant Jesus if she did not think it a very good one, and would she like to keep it? The good Mother could not inform her as to the resemblance, for she did not even look at it, and certainly would not keep it, as she would not know what to do with it. Needless to say, her friend went away very edified, even if a little hurt at seeing her photograph so daintily set aside.

It was her love of purity that stimulated her zeal in procuring the conversion of the Sister Penitents. Her severe mortifications were always offered for their salvation. Not being able to consecrate her life to caring directly for them, she often visited them and exhorted them to the practice of virtue. During five or six consecutive hours she took them privately and gave them all the consolation that lay in her power. Her principal care during her triennials was to choose good mistresses for them. She regarded this choice as one of the most essential obligations of her charge; the account that she had to render to God of this gave her a salutary fear.

When her term of superiority was over her obedience was so great that it can be easily compared with that of the ancient Fathers of the desert. She asked all her permissions with as much exactitude as one of the youngest novices, and she often repeated: "It does not matter whom we obey. If any one is given authority over me, even were it a poor simple villager, I would be as subject to her as to the most skilful superior." Her desire of obeying surpassed that of ambition for commanding in a great leader.

Ordinarily speaking, God does not hesitate in recompensing one who has arrived at such a high degree of perfection. Mother M. of the Infant Jesus had a presentiment of her approaching death, and anxiously devoted herself in making every preparation for it during her retreat in the year 1696. Her instructions, her conversations, had for subject the necessity of being in constant readiness to appear before God, or the happiness of enjoying the Divine Presence for all eternity. Some days before her last illness she said to one of the Sisters with a holy transport: "Oh, but I have a great desire to see my Lord and my God! I willingly and gladly say with Saint Paul: 'Who shall deliver from this body of death?' "

The last day of June, 1697, she had a fall, which seemed to be at first of little account; at least, so the doctor judged. Without doubt, God permitted this mistake of the eminent gentleman to prove once more the virtue of His worthy servant. For, although she had a burning fever, accompanied by violent headaches, no one took particular notice of her sufferings. Courageous and resigned she kept up as usual, and endeavored to follow the Community exercises, and until two days before her death she recited her Office and her Rosary. It was only then that the gravity of her state showed itself, and gave the Sisters the greatest disquietude. Remedies were useless, promises and prayers were not answered, and once more the Savior came to pluck the fairest lily from His monastic garden. A beautiful and edifying death crowned her splendid life-work; the Heavenly Reaper and Royal Gardener plucked the lily from its stem, and bore it away to deck His Heavenly Parterre, on July 22, 1697, feast of Saint Mary Magdalen.

Her body retained its flexibility; over her countenance there appeared an air of majesty and serenity that involuntarily inspired the beholder with respect and veneration. Many persons from the outside world were deeply moved, and for several hours were occupied in receiving through the grate objects and little articles that had come in contact with the precious remains. The Community that had loved her so much felt, after this immense loss, a quiet calm steal over them, a peaceful submission to the Divine Will, which appeared to be an effect of her intercession with God for them. The Right Reverend Bishop de Nesmond maintained among them this pious conviction. This prelate, having been apprised of her death, went to offer a Mass for the dear Mother de Bois-David, and after having expressed his sympathy for the Sisters, he said to them that this holy Religious, after having been so useful to them during life by her example and her exhortations, would now do more for them as their advocate before the Throne of God.

Mother M. of the Infant Jesus Simon de Bois-David was only fifty years old.

About this time the death of Sister M. of Saint Gertrude Cantel furnished us with an example of the tenderness and charity of the Blessed Eudes for much tried souls. Shortly after her profession this Sister lost her reason to such an extent that it was deemed necessary to separate her entirely from the Community; for thirty years she remained in this sad condition. Special asylums for this sad affliction were very rare in those days. The Reverend P. Herambourg, one of the most worthy sons of the holy missionary. had not yet founded the Sisters of the Good Savior, who devoted their lives to the relief and care of those poor afflicted ones. They, therefore, were obliged to do what they could in order to enclose and take care of this poor demented Sister. Before Sister M. of Saint Gertrude was entirely deprived of her reason the Blessed Eudes heard her confession and prepared her, himself, for the last Communion that she ever made. Later on he assured the Sisters that her cruel malady found her in the state of grace.

One year before the end of the superiority of Mother M. of the Nativity Sister M. of Saint John Olivier died, 1701, first Lay-Sister of the Order. She may well serve as a model for all the Sisters of her rank, by her generosity in following her vocation, her courage in the midst of the most painful labors, her equability of temper in all the annoying circumstances attending the different culinary occupations of her office, as well as other very trying duties, and especially by her spirit of prayer and recollection. In the midst of the most difficult duties she seemed to be like her beloved patron Saint John, reposing on the breast of the Divine Master. When she believed herself alone her heart, usually overflowing with ardor, burst forth in ardent prayers, and many times the Sisters would hide around the bake-room in order to hear the ejaculations of love that arose without let or hindrance from her lips, as she felt herself alone.

The Community had the greatest confidence in her prayers. No affairs seemed to succeed if it had not been recommended to her. At such a time she would cry out in all humility, in such a simple and natural manner: "Alas, my dear Sister, why do you ask a poor sinner like me for prayers; I would now be in the depth of hell if the good God did not have mercy on me!"

Sometimes, with an adroit and spiritual delicacy, she made use of the general confidence reposed in her to make them more careful in regard to the exercises. During one of her illnesses this good Sister was in bed in a room that served as a passage to other parts of the monastery. One of the portresses stopped to speak with her, and said a little more than was necessary. The invalid asked her what exercise the Community was at, and having learned that it was the hour for the assembly, she continued: "It is in the name of God that our Sisters are assembled; I have always asked the grace that no one would be kept away from an exercise on account of me." This little trait shows the lively desire she had to see God faithfully served.

The prolongation of her life was for many years a torment to her. She often said in the morning that if she would be living yet in the evening she would not be able to stand the pain, on account of the continuation of her exile in this vale of tears. She looked upon herself as a stranger, worthy of the contempt of all creatures, and sighing only after her union with the Sovereign Good. However, it was not until she had accomplished her ninety-ninth year that God called her to Himself, on December 20th. Her life was well filled, her holiness was the theme of every one, and we are sure that the Supreme Judge awarded her the recompense due to His faithful servants.

CHAPTER II

SUPERIORITY OF MOTHER M. OF SAINT ISIDORE HELLOUIN—RECEPTION OF THE PENITENTS BROUGHT BY THEIR FAMILIES—DEATH OF SISTER M. OF THE ANNUNCIATION GOUVILLE, AND OF SEVERAL OTHERS—CURE OBTAINED THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF THE BLESSED JOHN EUDES

SINCE the deposition of the first superior taken from the Order the Sisters M. of the Nativity Herson and M. of the Infant Jesus de Bois-David had succeeded each other at the head of the Community. In 1702 this could be so no longer. Mother M. of the Infant Jesus being dead, the other was not reeligible, and her advanced age did not permit her to be elected a sixth time.

We shall now introduce two new figures to the reader, two Sisters who, until now, have been unnamed and unknown: Mothers M. of Saint Isidore Hellouin du Bocage and Mary of Saint Catherine Blouet de Camilly, who, during the space of twenty-five years, gained the confidence of the Sisters and conducted them wisely and firmly in the ways of perfection. In the course of this history, as well as in those of other houses, this fact is nearly always noticed. Hence, we have grouped all the interesting occurrences around the names and lives of those superiors. Superiors are usually the head and heart; they give impulse to the whole body, and their life is a perfect summary of the interior and exterior life of their monastery. The choice of their Sisters indicate more clearly that they were the most holy and most distinguished subjects.

The first by order of date is Mother M. of Saint Isidore Hellouin du Bocage. This remarkable superior was born in Caen. in 1658. Her father was a nobleman, and exercised the office of Treasurer of France. Perhaps he had succeeded M. de Bernieres, that great friend of the Blessed Eudes. M. du Bocage had had relations with the servant of God, if we judge by the ease with which he permitted his daughter to enter the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity. This choice was very agreeable to him also on account of the esteem he had for this monastery.

While still a child Mlle. H. du Bocage was afflicted with a limp, which was very painful as well as very disagreeable. It was occasioned by the unskilful work of a surgeon who, in an operation, cut the nerve of her limb. This humiliation exposed her, in her childhood, to the railleries of her young companions, but it never diminished the affection of her family for her. She received a very careful education, and her lively penetrating spirit and large heartedness gave great pleasure to her parents. She was placed as a boarder in the Convent of the Augustinians of Coutances, where she remained until her twelfth year. She had the happiness then of making her First Communion, and at that time heard the first sound of the call that bade her leave home and friends to live for God in the cloister. She did not at that time respond, however, but returned to her family; she wished to know something about the great beautiful world that seemed so alluring to her youthful fancy. Although still young she was not long in finding out the dangers that surrounded her, and they inspired her with reflections far superior to her age. She especially understood that the best means of avoiding danger was to shun it, and she solicited her entrance in the convent. She was only fourteen years old.

From that day no hesitation was apparent on her part; a true vocation seemed to be the portion of this young child. To wait for it for several years did not seem to discourage her. The fear of the judgments of God, the desire of eternal happiness were not the only motives of her determination; her love for God, Who demanded her heart with a kind of jealousy, was the sole principle of her unshakeable resolution. As profession could not be made in the Order before the twentieth year the superiors had ample time to prove by what spirit she was actuated during the space of five years that she remained in the novitiate, and they always found her firm in her resolve. Her profession took place on June 22, 1677. One so well prepared could not but have been agreeable to the Divine Master. An ineffable joy invaded her soul in meditating these words of the Canticle of Canticles: "My Beloved is all to me, and I am all to Him." It was impossible for her to contain her transports, and she sometimes retired to her cell to hide the outward effects of divine grace. Fearing that her employments might suffer, she asked God to moderate her ardors, and this grace was granted her.

In the month of October, 1682, when Mother M. of the Trinity went to Paris to take over the government of the House of Saint Pelagie she chose, by a kind of inspiration, the young Sister M. of Saint Isidore for Assistant, and nearly all the good accomplished in that house was her work, since she had the care of the numerous Penitents that were there.

After the unsuccessful endeavor in Paris the superiors wisely judged it useful to take back our Sister, and innure her into the employments of the common life; she made great progress in the ways of humility and the interior life. As the exterior occasions of exercising her humility often failed her she begged one of the Sisters that worked with her, embroidering for the Church, to humble her whenever she felt inspired to do so; this Sister consented to satisfy her, and did it so neatly and so kindly that she did not know if she meant it or not. If it happened that Sister M. of Saint Isidore showed on those occasions a little surprise she very quickly begged her companion not to be so formal, and continue to render her this service, assuring her that she would be grateful to her for it all her life, because she was working for her spiritual advancement.

Her zeal for the salvation of souls could not remain inactive. We have recounted her efforts for the conversion of the four Protestants that were placed in the convent. Her prayers and her mortifications also obtained for her father the grace to renounce his worldly habits, and live a more Christian life, and finalily to die a happy death. During the building of the convent she undertook to catechise the workmen when they were taking their repast, and had the consolation of seeing them greedy for her instructions, and profit by them. She was employed at different times with the direction of the Penitents, and, as in Paris, those souls drew much fruit from her advice.

In the last place the guidance of the novitiate was confided to her; this important employment caused her much pain. The novices showed themselves prejudiced against her direction; their desire of the religious life and perfection could hardly surmount their antipathy; but not enough, however, to hinder their directress from perceiving it. Several months passed thus in hard combats on both sides. Sister M. of Saint Isidore, after many prayers and mortifications, ended by seeing her goodness and perseverence triumph, and those who had been most opposed to her happily submitted to her guidance. This example is very good for those Sisters who at first have but ill success in their employments, and it also indicates the best means of overcoming those difficulties.

All that is connected with the government of this Sister in Guingamp belongs to the history of that monastery. She was recalled to Caen in 1702 by a regular election.

The first care of Mother M. of Saint Isidore, on taking up her office, was to gain the confidence of the Sisters. She well understood that on this depended the whole success of her superiority. Her sweetness, goodness, and especially her unchanging equality of temper, were her stepping-stones to the success she coveted. One important change in the rules of the Penitents excited at first some discontent; but it was so truly inspired by charity, and was so visibly blessed by God, that very soon the cloud vanished. Here is the occurrence:

Under the influence of the many observations and comments received from Rome, at the time when they were striving to obtain the Bulls of Approbation, the Blessed Eudes established a rule that they were not to receive any Penitents who did not apply of their own free will. Mother Hellouin, moved by her ardent zeal, commenced to open the doors to all those that were placed there by their families. To observations that were made to her on this new move she replied: "To receive those who come here voluntarily is a precept imposed upon us by our fourth vow; to receive those who are brought to us by force is a counsel, and we should follow it. Besides, it often happens that those Penitents who come of their own volition show little fruits of amendment or conversion; it may occur that the contrary will happen, that those who are brought by force may in the end be touched by grace, and bear fruits of solid virtue after their conversion."

We believe that this remarkable and holy superior understood well, and thoroughly interpreted the spirit of the founder. During the life-time of the Blessed Eudes, even at Caen, there were nearly always some persons sent by order of the King, Intendants or the Bishops, to oversee how affairs were conducted. It is an incontestable fact that the Blessed did everything possible to have the House of Rennes accepted by the Order.

This house, from its foundation, received all those girls and women that were sent by the police officers, judges and other local magnates. If the doors of the monasteries had not been opened wide for all the weary and sin-laden who had need of such a shelter, and at the present day need it so sorely, who among us would say that the work of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge or the Homes of the Good Shepherd would be complete? In the holy Gospel it is related that our Lord received the repentant Magdalene with the utmost benevolence. He sought the Samaritan woman, and grew weary in the search; finding her He instructed her on the number and enormity of her sins, and gradually converted her. The woman caught in adultery was violently introduced to Him; she was laboring under a capital accusation, for her fault was a public one; the Good Shepherd did not repulse this poor sheep; she remained near Him after the departure of her accusers, and she merited to hear these divine words of pardon: "Has no one condemned thee? Neither shall I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more."

The Institute of the Blessed Eudes ought to be able to take care of three classes of persons, to continue in the Church the saving mission of the Divine Savior. For a great number of young persons, more light-minded than vicious, a short separation from the world and its dangers is a preventive remedy, and is, all things considered, very necessary and highly efficacious.

Some others there are who, although frivolous and danger-loving, are not yet so deeply rooted in vice; yet, they lack the courage to break their chains; the understanding parents see their danger, and come to the rescue, imposing a violent rupture; presently, being at a distance from the allurements of vanity, peace and quietness steal over them, faith reawakes in their hearts, and with it comes a sincere and durable repentance. Extreme ignorance, miserable surroundings often contribute to the fall of the others; religious instruction and Christian charity are alone capable of cleansing their wounds. In every case the first ambition of the zealous founder was realized by admitting those, for by doing so the Divine Majesty was less offended and a throng of mortal sins was avoided. Besides, it is not rare to find that persons, whose entrance is enforced, yield to grace and remain of their own free will for many years, and frequently the rest of their natural existence, in the asylums in which they had been compelled through sheer force to enter. Their virtue was by far more meritorious than if they came by their own free will.

Admissions of this kind are more appreciated and of greater advantage, because such admissions are based on the authority of the parents and guardians, making it easier for them to accomplish the duties of correction and vigilance in regard to their children, and render them subordinate. The habitual negligence of parents in fulfilling the grave duties they owe to their children, in our days, makes it more necessary still.

Mother Hellouin appreciated all these advantages while she was in Paris and Guingamp. So she was firm in her resolve. Still, to preserve order more easily, she divided the Penitents into two classes, and arranged the building especially for this purpose. To this effect nine Sisters were to be employed in the immediate practice and employment demanded by the fourth vow. In 1704 Right Reverend Bishop de Nesmond visited all these classes, and viewed with entire satisfaction the arrangements made to make the place as commodious as possible.

About this time one of the Penitents gave a singular example of attachment to the beautiful virtue of purity. On account of some illness she had been placed with a charitable lady who often rendered such services to the Sisters. receiving persons, too, when they left the house. Some old pals of hers, finding out where she was, came and tried to take her away by force; at the risk of being killed this poor lamb, finding herself entrapped, jumped from the second floor into a court opposite the street. In the fall she was seriously injured. The Sisters having heard of the affair, full of admiration for her courage, brought her back to the monastery, and helped to take care of her; she soon recovered, and up to the last never ceased to give much consolation by reason of her virtue and heroic constancy in suffering.

It was not so easy to convert all the Penitents, nor were they as faithful after their conversion. At that time there was a soothsayer brought there. She was, as is usual, possessed by the devil. The memoirs of those times give much information about her strange oddities and stranger sayings. She was called Marie Bucaille, and was born in the township of Cherbourg. Couriosity was very rife concerning her; in fact, every one was excited by all that public rumor credited her with. The Annals pleasantly state that the convent would have been very rich if they would only consent to satisfy the curiosity of all those who desired to see and interview her. An attentive superintendent soon discovered the imposture of this able hypocrite. But alas! she had abused so many graces that God sent her from time to time, that notwithstanding the zeal of the Sisters, her death was anything but reassuring. She died on July 27, 1704. This woman, so strangely celebrated, was only fifty years old.

In the month of April of that year the monastery lost one of its venerable old Religious, Sister M. of the Annunciation Gouville. She was the third Religious of the Order. In those first years she made herself very useful; she was ready at all times and under all circumstances to do the most laborious work. In order to be able to oblige the Sisters she got permission to rise every morning an hour earlier than the others, so as to awaken them; her meditation was always made when the Community descended, and she was beginning her day's labor. This was not a light mortification for her, and she imposed many others on herself which, to our delicate fancy, is frightful. One, for instance, was to let boiling wax run down her arm. Respect for holy statues was a favorite devotion of hers; she ornamented them with great taste, and wished to see them everywhere through the convent, in order to inspire others, as well as herself, with good thoughts, and to give an occasion to every one to say a few prayers to the saints they represented.

The last years of her life were tried by severe and very humiliating infirmities; but her virtue was proof against trial, and she drew profit from it all, thus augmenting the merits she had accumulated during her long life. Her family got permission to visit her in the infirmary; but her respect for the enclosure prevented her giving her consent: "I do not wish to answer to God for these useless visits, for they only serve to break the cloister."

About this time we find new proofs of the veneration of the Sisters for the memory of their holy institutor. We have seen that this devotion, though private, commenced immediately after his death. God wished, for the glorification of His faithful servant, to grant from time to time some extraordinary graces. through his intercession. which reanimated confidence and love, and obliged them to join in thanksgiving to God and in grateful recognition of the loving intercession of their beloved Father.

The reader remembers the constant friendship that filled the hearts of the Blessed Eudes and M. de Langrie, and how closely they were united. The granddaughter of this generous founder was desirous of entering the Order that her grandfather had so loyally and royally assisted and supported by his wealth and influence. After numberless difficulties she made her profession under the name of Sister M. of Saint Michael. A few years after she made her vows she was taken with a violent fever accompanied with dysentery. Shortly after there appeared a prodigious swelling in her legs, with violent pains, so that the poor invalid could not bear the slightest touch. To relieve her a little it was necessary to keep her raised in the air, with some sort of machinery, where she remained covered with rugs and shawls. This painful state lasted about six weeks, while some of the Sisters were begging the Blessed Eudes by his intercession to hasten her recovery, or grant a speedy end to her tortures. Mother Hellouin brought the poor invalid a morsel of the chausible of the holy man, announcing to her that several Sisters were going to remain before the Blessed Sacrament until midnight, asking for her recovery, and told her to join her petitions with theirs for the same end.

The invalid then eagerly asked to be taken to the choir so that she could join them more fervently. During this short journey her pains were so acute that she said she never felt anything so terrible. After the Rosary and Litany of the Blessed Eudes the Sisters prostrated themselves with face to the floor; the sick Sister, wishing to imitate them, felt that she could—in fact, had strength enough. On rising up she felt no pain—it was gone; the swelling had disappeared also, and she felt renewed health and strength; there was really nothing left of her illness save a slight weakness. To return to her room she needed only to lean on another Sister.

The next day, on awaking, Sister M. of Saint Michael felt herself so well—indeed, cured—she was anxious to go to meditation with the Community, but to obey the Reverend

Mother Superior was her first duty, and she had told her to rise only for the seven o'clock Mass. Without feeling the least pain she undertook the position of kneeling, and presently joined all the Sisters in singing the *Te Deum* in thanksgiving for her cure. She assisted all that day in the Community exercises, as if no infirmity had ever imperilled her life.

The next day Mother M. of Saint Isidore called the doctor and the surgeon, declaring she desired them to make an attestation of this extraordinary cure, and demanded of both that they would give a certified statement of what had occurred. The doctor assured her that this recovery was something marvelous, and decidedly miraculous, and asked to see Sister M. of Saint Michael; she came, not feeling the slightest discomfort or inconvenience in ascending the stairs which led to the parlor. On seeing her the doctor declared himself perfectly ready to give his sworn statement. The surgeon, being a Protestant, acknowledged, also, that her present appearance and general health could not be ascribed to natural causes; only a short time previous he had given his verdict that she could not and would not ever recover; absolutely gave her up as a person soon about to die.

However, both doctors represented to the superioress the necessity she was under, as well as themselves, of allowing some time to pass before coming to any conclusion on the matter, so as to see if she were really as well as she seemed. Notwithstanding the promise formally given of taking into account human prudence Mother Hellouin had the weakness to yield to their wishes, and dispensed the cured Sister from Matins that evening. Chastisement followed only too quickly on the heels of the fault; Sister M. of Saint Michael was hardly in bed when all her pains returned. When she saw some one she asked for the Mother Superior, and told her how she was feeling again. This unexpected news deeply grieved the good Mother, and she recognized her fault. The following day, after Prime, she said to the Community: "My Sisters, I committed a great fault last evening in not letting Sister M. of Saint Michael follow all the exercises, as I had promised; aid me to make reparation." Her tears flowed in making this avowal; the Sisters recited the *Miserere* with their arms extended in the form of a cross, and the superioress promised to dress a poor child in honor of the Divine Infant Jesus, and to have nine Masses said in the church where the Blessed Eudes reposed, awaiting the general resurrection. A new cure was thus obtained, but it was not so prompt as the first. However, fourteen days after Sister M. of Saint Michael was named first Mistress of the Pensioners, and the whole year that she fulfilled this employment she never felt the least return of her malady.

The notice on this Sister's life tells us that in the course of her life she received many other signal favors from the Blessed, both exterior and interior. She died a holy death on January 2, 1742, aged sixty-six years, after having been forty-two years professed.

Those years were years of mourning for the monastery. It had the sorrow to lose several of the ancient Sisters, contemporaries of the holy founder, and of the first Mothers. Reading the notices and abridgments of the lives of those venerable Sisters the hidden operation of the intercession of the Blessed Eudes is profoundly visible throughout. We are told that nearly all the Religious lived more or less under his direct influence.

Besides Sister M. of Jesus Allain de Barbieres, of whom we had occasion to speak in a previous chapter, on account of her correspondence with the Blessed Eudes, the convent lost Sister M. of the Ascension Tinard. She had been educated by Reverend P. Moisson, or at least under his influence, as he was one of the daily companions of the Blessed during his missions. When this young lady was about twenty-one years old she made known her desire of entering the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity, in order to have the consolation of being a daughter of the Holy Heart of the Admirable Mother. Her pious uncle and tutor showed how pleased he was with her choice, and on the eve of the feast of this Holy Heart he wrote her the following letter:

> O my daughter, your decision has relieved me so much; indeed, I find myself incapable of thanking you sufficiently for the consolation you have given me. Be sure that on this beautiful feast I shall consecrate you entirely to the Holy Virgin, and I will beseech her to present you herself to her Divine Son, that you may be His spouse. I am transported with joy to be able to write to you in this way, and when the day of your espousals shall come I think I will die.

We love to find in these phases of our history the deep depths wherein lies, in all its pristine beauty, the devotion to the Sacred Hearts, truly a glowing tribute to the master-mind of the holy apostle of this devotion. Sister M. of the Ascension was a true spouse of Jesus crucified, and she made use of a thousand ingenious ways to recall to her mind constantly the sorrowful scenes of the Passion. If she carried some burden she saw in spirit Jesus carrying His cross. In dressing she thought of the white robe with which He was clothed in mockery and derision; taking off her habit she saw Him despoiled of His garment before His crucifixion; while taking her repose she desired to sleep in the wound of His Sacred Heart; if she kissed the floor she kissed it in union with and to bear Him company when He fell under the weight of His cross. Thus her most ordinary work was a prayer, and her ordinary prayer was a request to be entirely insensible to the pleasures of sense. It is permitted us to believe that she was heard; for her union with her crucified Spouse was continual; day and night she remained beside Him on the cross; her awaking in the morning was always a burst of love towards Him; it was instinctive and unerring.

Such a continuous application of her mind on God and eternal things did not hinder her from fulfilling the different employments confided to her. The illness that sapped her life-blood, and ultimately caused her death, was long and cruel; the irksomeness of lassitude, combined with great suffering, did not alter her temperament; her patience seemed unalterable. The only favor she requested was to wait as long as possible before sending her to the infirmary; it was the love of solitude and the desire she had of being able to give free vent to the ardent love she had for God—being alone helped her to speak to her Crucified in whatever strain she pleased. At the last moment, however, she was subjected to the violent assault of the demon. According to what is related in her biography it is to be supposed that he even appeared to her in a visible form. She then took holy water and made the sign of the cross several times with it, contemplating with love the crucifix, but she did not recover complete calm until she took a reliquary in which was enclosed a particle of the true Cross.

It was the last effort of the enemy of her soul. She slept sweetly and holily in the Lord on Wednesday in Holy Week, 1705.

Sister M. of Saint Barbara Robillard was a poetess. A canticle to the Divine Heart of Jesus is inserted in her biography. It is full of simplicity and piety. However, her humility was more remarkable than her poetic talent. We shall cite here this original trait, which at the same time is very practical. She eagerly asked in full chapter to be told her defects. Evidently her request was sincere, so they did not spare her. When she returned to her cell she wrote on a card all the observations that had been made, writing them in large characters, with the title, *My Portrait,* and placed this script in the most conspicuous place, where it remained until her death. Several times she was told to take it away and destroy it, that it was quite sufficient that her defects were patent to the eyes of every one, that he who runs may read them, but she only answered: "That is not enough, for it would give me no trouble. I wish that these defects had never existed in me, that they had never been written on this paper, but when they see me they will discover many others." These sentiments are very conformable to those that we frequently meet with in the writings of the Blessed P. Eudes. This humble Religious died on February 6, 1708.

In that same year, on the feast of Saint Joseph, Sister M. of Saint Colombe Dannemont died at the age of seventy-two years, and after spending about fifty years in the monastery. The characteristic and distinctive mark of this fervent Religious was to strive to the best of her ability to render herself useful in the religious life. Notwithstanding her want of talent for writing she applied herself with great zeal to gather the souvenirs and traditions of the Institute, and put them in order. Before her death she confided it to Sister M. of Saint Augustine le Boucher, who did much service in preparing and writing the Annals and the Flowers of the Order.

While in the world she had been married to M. des Fourneaux, and had occupied a high rank in the social world. In the monastery she performed the lowliest duties. For twenty-seven years she was occupied as laundress for the Penitents, and rendered them the vilest services without showing any disgust. When they were unable to wait on themselves through illness she begged to be allowed as a favor to sweep their apartments.

Her prayer was very simple, but very elevated, if we can judge by the meditations on the *Pater* and on the Commandments of God, which the Annals have conserved.

The wounds of our Lord were often considered by her as asylums, where all creatures ought to fly for refuge. By an act of universal charity she placed all creatures in those gaping wounds, and fleeing there herself for refuge met, as it were, all those she had sent there. In the wounds made by the thorns on the Sacred Head of the Divine King, she placed the Pope, the Cardinals, Bishops, and all the prelates of the Catholic Church, supplicating our Lord to fill them with His spirit, so that they would govern according to His Divine Will. In the wound of the Right Hand she placed all kings, princes and all the military, in order that their conduct would be inspired by the Divine Wisdom, the spirit of faith and the fear of God. She placed in the wound of the Left Hand magistrates and judges, asking for them that zeal for justice and religion that was so necessary for them. Parish priests, curates, superiors and all those who had charge of souls she placed in the Right Foot, in order that from that open wound they would absorb the gifts of counsel and piety. In that of the Left Foot she placed all sinners, making it their refuge, particularly for the Penitents of the monastery. She prayed our Lord to grant them a sincere and lasting conversion. She reserved for herself and all Religious of both sexes the Wound of the Sacred Heart, because Religious are more especially consecrated to God, and she asked for them that they would become living copies of this Divine Heart.

Having become very infirm Sister M. of Saint Colombe thought only of preparing herself for death by long prayers. With the permission of her superiors she was in the habit of reciting every day that wonderful prayer called the Psalter, and she induced many others to the same practice. Her soul was truly ready to appear before the Sovereign Judge Who, we trust, received her in mercy.

It was in the midst of these successive deaths, and of several others, that we are unable to mention, that the first superiority of Mother M. of Saint Isidore Hellouin du Bocage came to an end. Sister M. of Saint Catherine Blouet de Camilly was elected in her place. These two Religious alternately governed the house until 1738.

CHAPTER III

MOTHER M. OF SAINT CATHERINE BLOUET DE CAMILLY, HER FIRST SUPERIORITY—DEATH OF SISTERS MARY OF THE PRESENTATION LECONTE DE LAUNEY, AND OF MARY OF THE NATIVITY HERSON

MOTHER M. of Saint Catherine was the granddaughter of Madame de Camilly, the devoted protectress of Our Lady of Charity from the very beginning, and the mother of Father Blouet, first successor of the Blessed John Eudes. We believe that it was in consideration of this last-named priest that the Bishop of Coutances presided at her profession. Her pious grandmother, as well as her parents, formed her young heart to piety from her cradle. One anecdote of her childhood will suffice to show the effects of her teaching, and the deep attraction she had for holy things. On one of the last days of Holy Week she was taken to the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity by her governess in company with her sisters, her grandmother being also present. The Religious were then singing the three nocturns, so the Office was unusually long. The young child did not complain, but not so her good grandmother. This lady made her complaints to the Blessed, who easily promised to settle the difficulty, and he did it more readily still when he learned the excessive fatigue felt by his dear daughters. From that day on they only sang the first nocturn.

The poor were the first fruits of her charity towards the neighbor. While still a wee child she learned to see Jesus Christ in them, and relieved them in their days of misfortune, guided by a spirit of faith. To sweeten their misery she often deprived herself of the little pleasures afforded her by her family, and knew how to profit by all these occasions to recall to them, with that charming grace which was natural to her, the truths of our holy religion. Her love for the Virgin of virgins urged her to instruct her hearers in all that concerned the devotion to the Queen of Heaven. Sometimes she distributed images, at other times she gave them rosaries, and then taught them how to recite it with confidence and devotion, striving to instil into them that confidence that she herself enjoyed.

One day the Blessed Eudes met her in the monastery, and in a spirit of prophecy told her that God had destined her to be later on one of the principal pillars of the house. This announcement made a lasting impression on the mind of the child. Some time after her parents placed her in the Ursuline Convent, to prepare for her First Communion; this convent was situated in Pont-Audemer; those ladies tried to induce her to enter their Community; she replied that it was impossible, because God had made known to her His Will—that the Reverend Father Eudes had predicted that she would be a Religious of Our Lady of Charity.

At length the parents of Mlle. de Blouet yielded to her entreaties, although it cost them dearly, as they loved her tenderly. She was permitted to enter the novitiate in her fifteenth year. She was clothed with the holy habit on the feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, 1683. The joy that she felt had a good effect on her health, and she became quite strong. She assumed with ardor the most painful tasks, and some of the hardest work of the monastery, and if she could have followed her attraction she would have made her profession as a Lay-Sister. Her entreaties and anxiety to belong to this rank were very eager, until her superiors absolutely forbade her to mention it again. This good Mother testified all her life a special affection for those humble Sisters in whose merits she wished to be a partaker.

This attraction for the hidden life made some of the Sisters think that this young Religious had no aptitude for the employments of the Choir-Sisters, and that God called her more to sanctify herself than others. They had no conception how the prophecy of the Blessed institutor would be realized. But they quickly changed their opinion when obedience confided some of those functions to Sister M. of Saint Catherine; her intelligence and remarkable discernment were often talked about. Her condescension and her amiability gained her the esteem and affection of all the Sisters with whom she was employed.

She often made use of these words of our Lord for the subject matter of her meditations: "I am come to serve, not to be served." We can say that they were the rule of her conduct. Certain of her virtue the superiors employed her in every emergency, incessantly changing her work. The dormitories were not yet built, and she had passed more than twenty years without having a particular cell for herself. Very often she had to change her bed during the week to oblige the sick; if they wanted her to watch, or to supply the place of any one, she was always ready. This humble life, and this earnest desire of effacing herself, was very effective, and it was no small astonishment to the Community when she was named Directress of the Novitiate, not being more than thirty-two years old. Probably the most astonished of all, and the one that was the most afflicted, was Sister M. of Saint Catherine herself. The confessor of the house was obliged to console her, and furnish the strongest reasons why she should submit to the Divine Will. From that time she got into the habit of saying, by his wise advice, these words of the *Pater noster*: "*Fiat voluntas tua sicut in coelo et in terra;*" they strengthened her and overcame her excessive fear for honorable charges.

The conduct of the new directress was full of goodness and thoughtfulness for the novices. Without sparing them, she endeavored to render the yoke of the Lord sweet and light for the young untried souls so recently committed to her care. Her principal aim, however, was to detach them from everything earthly, and especially from themselves, in order to live for God alone. She often repeated to them that the spirit of their holy vocation consisted "in union with God, in an entire abnegation of self, and in perfect charity for the neighbor."

After having fulfilled this important function for several years, Sister M. of Saint Catherine was charged with the Penitents. She had the prudence, zeal, discretion and charity necessary for this difficult employment; nothing really escaped her penetration and vigilance. Hypocrites were quickly unmasked; those who wanted to practice virtue received encouragement to continue in that pursuit; the rebellious were sweetly and firmly brought back to their duty by their able mistress. This good Religious applied herself especially to choose the proper time and place to administer correction.

Hence, it was but natural that all eyes would turn to this virtuous Religious, and they saw in her an able and wise successor to the Mother M. of Saint Isidore. Her intellectual qualifications were beyond the ordinary, and her profound self-contempt persuaded her that she had really no qualifications for fulfilling any high office. So it was like a bolt from the blue azure of an unclouded sky when she found that the office of superior had been laid on her shoulders. Her sorrow was indeed intense, but she feared to fail in submission to God's holy Will. For more than six months it was impossible for her to fulfill her duties without shedding tears. Time, which usually takes the edge off where grief is concerned, could not efface the impression she received when called upon to shoulder her heavy responsible office. She had to do continual violence to herself to fulfill her duties as superior; so it is safe to say this augmented her merits, for never in all that time, notwithstanding her sorrow, did she waver in her fidelity.

During the whole time that she was superior Mother M. of Saint Catherine sought to put in practice these words of our Lord to His Apostles: "Learn of Me Who am meek and humble of heart." It was ordinarily the resolution made during her retreats, and she was faithful to it. It was with a marvelous sweetness that she guided her Sisters; even those whom she was forced by duty to admonish were convinced of her goodness. It was especially in regard to timorous souls that she showed the extent of her motherly love. Mother Blouet had received a particular gift to calm them and inspire them with confidence in God.

The virtues she recommended the most, with this confidence in God, were a sincere love for the neighbor and profound humility: "Without this virtue of humility," she said, "we are powerless to do good; all our faults usually come from lack of this virtue." Her example spoke louder than her words. The marks of respect attached to her office were very distasteful to her, and her continual care was to remember they were given to God Whose place she took in her Community. Persuaded of her own nothingness and meanness she took no account of faults that concerned herself personally, and suffered no excuses made her, save those really needed, and that had to be made. She then would make answer: "There is no reason to disquiet yourself; it only passed between us; so I pray you not to mention it any more." Her actions on such occasions were irresistible; one could well believe that she would retain no remembrance of it.

Apart from the consecration of the chapel, of which we have already spoken, her first term of government was not noticeable for any exterior affair worthy of comment; however, it was remarkable for many deaths among the Community.

The first was that of Sister M. of the Presentation Leconte de Launey, gained to God and the religious life, as we have already seen, by the Blessed Eudes and Marie Desvallees, in the year 1654. Her humility would not permit her under any consideration to accept the title of benefactress, which the grateful Community wished to bestow upon her, and she always chose the humblest work, such as the garden, the laundry and the infirmary. This virtuous Sister forgot completely the delicacy of her youth and girlhood, and devoted herself to all the work of the house with a courage worthy of admiration, especially as she was afflicted for some time by excessive corpulence, which made work very hard for her. She had been entire months laid up in the infirmary without being able to undress in order to get her proper rest. The charity of Sister M. of the Presentation was wonderful; she never allowed her own overwhelming fatigue to draw the least complaint from her lips.

Her great virtue had gained for her the veneration of all those that knew her. Even in her old age the little boarders begged for permission to visit and to kiss the hand of her whom they called the *Saint*. This venerable Sister understood how to entertain those little people with such cordiality and sweetness that their young hearts loved while venerating her.

In the long infirmities of her late declining years God was pleased to recompense the charity that she exercised towards the sick. Her Sisters vied with each other in giving her the care she required, and this continued for sixteen months. Every one said that they had never seen an old person more amiable, whose temper was so unruffled at all times, even while undergoing the most intense pain, nor one more meek and affable in manner. Thus full of merits she rendered her soul to God on June 17, 1709, being eighty-five years of age, and had been professed fifty-two years.

Mother M. of the Nativity Herson died three years later, on June 4, 1712. She was eighty-two years old, and had been professed fifty-nine years, and had consecrated herself to the good and well-being of the monastery for seventy years of her long career. Few Religious, if there be any, who are more entitled to the gratitude and veneration of the whole Institute; and fewer yet have left brighter examples of heroic virtue. The reader already knows, through the pages of this history, the life and life-work of one so intimately bound up in the Origin of the Order. Very little remains for us to add.

If we study her life in its entirety, Mother Herson will appear to us, and rightly so, the perfect model of the strong woman. In her long career we find temptations and struggles, but not one occasion is mentioned of her growing weary or dispirited; the saddest events, and they were many, the most violent contradictions always found and left her mistress of herself. If she had some imperfections in her lifetime they were caused, no doubt, by her excessive leaning towards the virtue of fortitude, which rendered it very difficult for her to tolerate any laxity in the service of God, or any resistance to obedience. It was evidently on account of this that her superiority was discontinued after her first triennial. Later on the Sisters appreciated her spirit of regularity better, and she was reelected four times.

The merit of this virtue was widespread; she was always firm, always uniform in her dealings with others; she was stern with herself. All this is the more to be admired, as many times this good Mother acknowledged that she had never known any sensible consolations in the service of God. It was, therefore, her maxim to seek God for Himself alone. Ordinarily speaking, during her prayers and meditations she simply annihilated herself at His feet, reviewed her sins and miseries, and implored His pardon, His goodness and His infinite mercy. Her daily conduct proved that she esteemed true humility and great patience more than ecstasies and raptures. Infirmities due to advanced age had no effect on her attendance at prayer, Office or meditation; she was always the first; it was a source of admiration to the Sisters, and they often upbraided themselves for their own laxity upon seeing her give such an example in her declining years.

In calling to Himself the Blessed institutor God bountifully left this faithful interpreter of his spirit and his wishes for thirty-two years; nobly did she acquit herself of this office. Nearly all the Religious that entered during that space of time had her either for directress or superioress, and the perusal of their lives is the best proof of the solid formation they received from this able teacher. Fervor reigned to such a degree in the Community that it would be a difficult task to find a counterpart.

The instructions of Mother Herson were mainly on the devotion to the Sacred Hearts, and in her talks with her Sisters she was the faithful echo of her holy uncle. She said in his own words: "The Religious of Our Lady of Charity have a very special obligation to honor this incomparable Mother, and they should apply themselves in every way possible to belong to her, not in quality of servants, like all other Christians, but as daughters of her Holy Heart." She esteemed this title more than all others. The celebration of the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary caused her a holy joy and made her say: "This feast belongs more to heaven than earth, and we ought to have an infinite esteem for the happiness we owe to God for having singled out and chosen our Order to be the first to celebrate this feast; but the devotion that we ought to bring to it consists in rendering our hearts like to this admirable Heart."

The veneration of Mother M. of the Nativity for the Divine Heart of Jesus was greater still. Nothing could satisfy her desire of acknowledging and thanking the Charity of this Divine Source of Love for us! she did all that lay in her power to propagate this worship. It was in great part due to her zeal that they were allowed to celebrate that feast in the monastery. Her devotion even prompted her to desire that the Community would recite during the octave the Office, with the nine lessons, as on the day of the feast. She watched especially that nothing was contrary to the spirit of the Church and strict observance, for one of her maxims was: "Our devotion ought not consist in undertaking many things, but in doing well what we know to be the Will of God for us." The indulgences attached in perpetuity to these feasts were asked for and obtained during her last term of superiority.

To inspire the Sisters with esteem for the Institute, Mother M. of the Nativity recalled often to their minds their noble and holy origin—that is to say, the Sacred Hearts of

Jesus and Mary, and showed them the obligation they were under of not suffering anything in their lives contrary to the holy engagements of religion, and of working always with new ardor to render themselves less unworthy of a vocation so holy and sublime.

After the devotion to the Sacred Hearts, the most ordinary subject of the conferences of this pious Mother was union and charity among the Sisters. Particular friendships were looked upon by her as an abomination, and the destruction of the religious life; and she combated it with energy and perserverance. Her charity was universal; however, she knew how to surround with motherly care those that were weak and timid, and became their protectress and devoted friend. She repeated often these words of Saint Francis de Sales: "Our neighbor is the tree of life, and it is forbidden to touch him under pain of death; we must do all we can for him, except to damn him. We ought to love him, not in words only, but in deed and in truth; we should love him cordially, no matter what his condition, as we love ourselves, for this is the measure of the charity prescribed us by our Lord Himself."

Her conduct responded to her teaching. Mother Herson, who had a character very energetic and strongly tempered, had been seen to weep with pity for and with those Sisters who had to bear much sorrow. In such a robust nature, truly this was an astonishing and touching trait. Neither was she surprised that great griefs are often the outcome of little troubles; she compassionated and solaced them to the best of her ability, but she did not wish them to grow lax, or to remain disheartened. "It does not matter to our archenemy," she said, "whether he binds us with a silk thread or a heavy chain; what is of importance for his purpose is, that we are bound. He makes use of all sorts of little snares, uses all manner of means to cast us down; but we must resist him every time, and be faithful to God in little things, as well as in the greater."

Among some of the many wise sayings of this Mother we find this: "Walk simply and surely." She wished that they would walk humbly and simply in the ordinary path of virtue, without occupying themselves with subtilities or secrets of the spiritual life.

Notwithstanding a life so entirely consecrated to the practice of all virtues, this heroic servant of God had a mortal fear of death and the judgments of God. Doubtless, the Lord permitted this terror to hide from her the ample harvest of merits she had acquired, and had garnered up in her humble way. Like Saint Bernard she was seen to tremble at these words: "Man knows not if he is worthy of love or of hate." But without yielding to discouragement she animated herself to be more faithful to her duties, in order to render herself more worthy of the Divine mercy. She followed the exercises of the Community until her death, without being dispensed or dispensing herself from the fasts and abstinences, even during her old age, and while laboring under many infirmities. The doctor urged her not to fast during her last Lent, but she begged him to permit her, saying: "See, doctor, it may be my last." The way in which she uttered these words made a great impression on the Sisters, who all felt it was the announcement of her approaching death.

However, the venerated Mother continued her ordinary life up to the evening of June 3d. That day the Sisters saw her at all the exercises; but the next morning, at the moment of rising, they heard some moans coming from her cell. She had been stricken with a sudden illness while dressing herself. The doctor and the confessor were immediately called, and found her in danger. Although she did not appear to be conscious she kissed the crucifix when it was presented to her. It was while pressing it to her lips that she rendered her generous soul to God on Saturday, June 4, 1712, during the octave of the feast of the Blessed Sacrament; she was eighty-two years old.

God, in His goodness, spared her the terrors of death, which she feared so much.

Morally and physically, Mother M. of the Nativity Herson had many points of resemblance with her venerable uncle. Each had the same energy of will, the same perseverance in undertakings, the same harshness for self, and the same kindness for others. The piety of the niece seemed only to have been a little less unctious and less tender. Like her uncle she had a healthy constitution, small sized, but well built; had a voice strong and very sweet. She had towards the end of her life a palsied condition of the head which was bent down on her breast. She had also been afflicted with deafness.

The material we have used in the first part of this work is due in a very great measure to the veneration of Mother Herson for her holy uncle. She took the utmost care to collect all his letters, his writings, sayings, and other jottings of his, and God conserved her life and her faculties until the first historians commenced to gather the necessary documents to begin their work, which we know was a labor of love. Hence, the source whence is drawn all information is absolutely sure. This important service rendered by Mother M. of the Nativity to all the Children of the Blessed Eudes, and her heroic virtues will cause her memory to ever remain in benediction among them.

CHAPTER IV

SUPERIORITY OF MOTHERS MARY OF SAINT ISIDORE HELLOUIN DE BOCAGE AND MARY OF SAINT CATHERINE BLOUET DE CAMILLY—THE YOUNG FRANCES BAZIN—EPISCOPATE OF RIGHT REVEREND BISHOP DE LORRAINE—DISCUSSION CONCERNING THE CONSTITUTIONS—TWO STATUES BELONGING TO THE BLESSED EUDES ARE DONATED TO THE MONASTERY—LETTER OF MONSIGNOR DE BELZUNCE ON THE PESTILENCE AT MARSEILLES

AFTER having made known, to the best of our ability, some of the first Mothers we are obliged now to limit ourselves to the notice of some of those Sisters whose virtues have merited honorable mention, and will, we trust, make them known. During the superiority of Mother M. of Saint Isidore, who succeeded in 1714 to Mother Blouet, we shall only mention the truly edifying death of a young pensioner or boarder. We dedicate this charming recital to all those who have succeeded her in the boarding school of Our Lady of Charity.

The little Frances Bazin lost both parents while still very young, and at the age of seven years was placed in the monastery by M. de Saint-Honorine, her tutor. At that time she appeared to have a very limited understanding, and she became the laughing-stock of her little companions. Far from being ashamed or worried the poor child appeared quite happy to be able to give some diversion to the rest. However, she testified a great desire to receive Holy Communion. Her mistresses profited by these good dispositions to correct her faults, particularly her spirit of laziness. This bad disposition is one of the hardest to eradicate when it takes possession of children, for its many ramifications are ordinarily a part of their temperament, and is sometimes deeply rooted there. The holy ardor of Frances to unite herself to her Divine Master cured her, as it were, by a species of miracle. She had a great repugnance to study her catechism up to that time; now she would not give it up for one moment. She employed herself in work during recreation, to make up for her past sloth; indeed, it was necessary to moderate her piety, fearing its bad effects on her health.

The progress of the pious child in the other virtues was not less admirable. Her charity for her companions sometimes amounted to heroism. One of them asked her one day to help her do some work; our little Frances willingly complied. Presently the mistress perceived that her own work was undone, and fearing she was about to fall back into her sluggish ways she reproved her somewhat harshly. The humble child received her punishment with meekness and perfect submission, without betraying the secret of her little friend, the mistress finding out the truth through another of the pupils who could not look on this punishment without feeling sorry for the little Frances, as she knew it was quite unmerited on her part. Severity was then changed into admiration for such precocious virtue. The charitable child continued thus to sacrifice herself on every occasion for the other boarders, drawing much satisfaction and extreme pleasure from all as if she were indeed their little servant.

Charity and mortification also made her deprive herself of her dessert at meal-time, in order to give an alms to the poor Penitents. Her mistresses were obliged to moderate her fervor, and ordered her to eat whatever was served. She strove to indemnify herself by mortifying herself some other way; as for instance, making her bed less commodious, putting little pebbles in her shoes, placing herself in the most wearisome position, and a thousand other ways, for she secretly wished to imitate all that she heard read of in the lives of holy Religious.

It was only after this admirable preparation that she was admitted to make her First Communion. Her confessor praised her very much; he was in admiration of her pious and saintly dispositions, and could not understand how there could be so much sanctity in a child of such a tender age. For a long time past the pious child begged the assistant directress to receive her in the novitiate. From the beautiful day of her First Communion, her first union with our Lord, her desire of giving herself to Him irrevocably by religious profession became her one ambition; she wished she could add on a few years to her youth so as to be able to realize her desire the sooner. God reserved to Himself the satisfying of these ardent aspirations of her young heart. He directed her.

One year after her First Communion a violent fever put the life of the pious Frances in danger. Soon it became visible to every beholder that their beautiful lily was to be cut from the stem; that she was a fruit ripe for heaven every one agreed, and their hearts hardly desired to lose this spotless victim of Divine Love so soon. Her patience and her sweet winning ways were the most edifying sights any one could desire. She did not understand anything that was said to her, except when they mentioned God, and it appeared as if she never lost sight of Him. Her ardent desire of seeing Him face to face was so intense that to make her accept the remedies ordered for her it was only necessary to say that by taking them she would shorten her Purgatory, and thus enjoy the sooner the Divine Presence.

One of her mistresses offered her some newly-gathered cherries; the little one looked at them with pleasure; then in a transport she asked if in depriving herself of them she would have a chance of still further shortening her Purgatory. The Sister replied that in her state of exhaustion this little satisfaction was highly permissible. She responded: "But will I not see God sooner if I deprive myself of them for His love?" It was not possible to say anything to the contrary, and the thought that this little sacrifice would advance her happiness made her make the sacrifice with the fondest love.

The delicacy of her conscience showed itself in her little imperfections; she would confess them with the greatest sincerity and contrition. After having received the Last Sacraments with a piety which is easier to imagine than describe she earnestly asked the favor of being buried in the religious habit. Her extreme youth did not permit that this favor would be granted her.

After her edifying death they discovered the motive of her appeal in a little paper signed by her own hand, on which was written: "I have made the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience at the age of eight years. I have since that time renewed them every year, and I shall keep them until my last sigh." She asked God every day for the grace of fidelity to her promises, saying at the end of her prayers: "My God, give me the grace to die in the practice of the virtues of poverty, chastity and obedience." The meaning of this invocation was gradually understood, and also why she had appeared strange to her companions and her mistresses. At least the holy remains of this dear child repose with the Religious, whose virtues she so courageously imitated.

The need of having the Constitutions re-printed was felt during the second superiority of Mother Hellouin, but the question as to which copy should get the preference arose for discussion. The Monastery of Guingamp was very eager to see a reproduction of the first Constitutions of 1670. This was the advice of a large number of the Religious of Caen, but the Mother Deposed, Mary of Saint Catherine, as well as the oldest members, pronounced in favor of the edition that had been revised by the Blessed institutor. This debate that had been lightly touched upon in 1704 was only definitely settled in 1734. Would to God that in the religious Orders there never had been less clashing of wills by reason of differences of opinions, or a higher motive in preserving peace and concord. We are happy to say that we have not found a single trace of a failure in charity, nor of the faintest change in the cordiality existing between those good Mothers. Everything was settled in the simplest and most affectionate way possible. Each defended her sentiments before the ecclesiastical superiors and then tranquilly awaited their decision.

It is a real pleasure to read in the old Annals the account of the solemn chapter presided over by the Abbot de Pibrac, during which this grave affair was discussed for the first time. Perhaps we might reproach this superior with a certain inexperience in dealing with religious Communities, but then we owe respect for the liberty of the Sisters who, being gathered there, had every right to their own opinion; taken altogether, we find it a charming tale of the olden days. Two Sisters came, one after the other, and placed themselves on their knees, and read successively the reasons brought to bear by the two parties. The first defended the ancient Constitutions, and stated that they ought to resume them, because their approbation was contained in the Bull of Erection of the Order. The other replied that the new ones had been revised by the pious institutor, and that he manifested very distinctly and clearly his desire to see them thus observed in perpetuity. Later, those belonging to this party proved in an irrefutable manner that the pretended approbation of Rome actually never existed; and that in order to find it in the Bull of Alexander VII it would be necessary to give to some general terms a sense that it really lacked. The Doctors of the Sorbonne, having been consulted, responded in this way, and Father Costil, with very authentic documents, made an absolutely convincing report in defense of the new Constitutions.

After the statement of the Sisters had been given the Abbot de Pibrac took the votes of forty-two professed Sisters; there were only two voices more for the ancient Constitutions. This feeble majority embarrassed the superior more than Mother Blouet and some older Sisters, who observed that it came from the young Religious. It could not be pronounced upon, and when, after her reelection, Mother Hellouin urged them to decide the affair, he ended by saying it would be better to wait and submit the matter to the new Bishop.

Right Reverend Bishop de Nesmond had died on June 16, 1715, at the age of eighty-six years. His episcopate was long and very fruitful. During fifty-three years, from the fifteenth of May, 1662, until his death, we can say that he covered his diocese with the most useful foundations. He always proved a devoted protector to the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity. This history contains numerous proofs of his vigilant solicitude for the work of sanctification accomplished there, and his many personal benefactions to the Sisters claimed their enduring gratitude.

The Cardinal de la Tremouille was named Bishop of Bayeux, but being Ambassador from France to Rome, and soon after transferred to the Archbishopric of Cambrai, he never visited his diocese. The Abbot de Pibrac, Dean of the Chapter, took possession in his name.

MM. de Pibrac, de Launoy-Hue and Neel, his Vicars-General, administered the diocese as Vicars of the Chapter until Right Reverend M. de Lorraine took possession.

This prelate was born on February 13, 1665, was the son of Louis de Lorraine, Count of Armagnac, and of Catherine de Villeroi, daughter of the Marshal of that name. Louis XIV, who was acquainted with his fearless opinions, bestowed many benefices upon him, but he did not wish to confide a Bishopric to him. The Regency chanced to be a misfortune to the diocese of Bayeux. The Abbe Peschard, a declared Jansenist, took possession for him on October 30, 1719. He became, in conjunction with M. Helyes, the evil genius of this vacillating Bishop. We are told by the Annals that if he had been left to himself Bishop de Lorraine would have been all right, and would have had the goodwill and regard of his flock.

Be that as it may, on his entrance into his diocese he did not conform to the usuages of his predecessors, and did not go and pray in the Chapel of the Holy Virgin of Our Lady of the Deliverance, and soon an order was issued, which proved that if he himself was not of the number of the appellants against the Bull *Unigenitus* he was entirely submissive to their influence, and espoused their interests. This order took away the powers: 1, from all superiors of religious Communities; 2, from all secular or religious priests who were confessors and preachers in the diocese; 3, annulled the permissions granted for chapels not established; and 4, revoked the sanctions given to the statutes and rules of Congregations and Confraternities. The end for which this order was given was to "entrust his flock to good peaceful ministers, and known enemies of dangerous excesses * * * * God gave us good intentions," continued this prelate; "thank Heaven we have no other intention than to make known the reign of Jesus Christ Who is a God of peace. Please God, we shall not employ in any other way the character He has been pleased to honor us with * * * * "

M. de Pibrac, according to this order, renounced immediately the superiority of Our Lady of Charity. Evidently Mother Hellouin could not treat the question of the change of the Constitutions with such a prelate. Even before his arrival in Bayeux many complaints were lodged against him; his conduct in regard to the appellants, and his meetings with them, had been denounced, and his refusal to have Mass said or sermons preached in the monastery was very disconcerting, if not openly talked about.

The anxiety of the Sisters was extreme; they were aware that all the other Communities of the Visitation and the Ursulines were harrassed by Jansenistic superiors and confessors who had been imposed upon them. Notwithstanding the resistance of a great number, there was formed a group of dissenters in the Communities thus directed; peace seemed to have been banished, and the members were daily engaged in the most violent discussions.

Two holy priests, MM. Halley, were at that time directing the Community; one was confessor of the Religious, and the other confessor of the boarders and Penitents. When Mother M. of Saint Isidore asked for a renewal of their faculties for these functions Bishop de Lorraine replied that those clergymen were not to his satisfaction, that another choice was necessary, and that if the Sisters gave him proof of their submission he would bestow his affection upon the Community.

This response threw her into consternation. The Mother Superior and Mother Blouet, then deposed, made a vow to have twenty Masses said in honor of Our Lady of Deliverance, and to recite the Office of the Immaculate Conception in choir for one year, to obtain the favor that the Community would be preserved from those cruel trials. They comemnced the recitation of the Office on May 5th. Aid came unexpectedly, and it was durable.

The deposition of Mother M. of Saint Isidore took place on May 11th, and the Bishop had designated the Reverend M. Lousel, Dean of the Sepulchre, and Reverend M. Hamon, parish priest of Saint Gilles, to preside. It was clearly indicated by this appointment that either would be named as Father Superior of the house. To avoid this catastrophe Mother M. of Saint Isidore wrote and asked him to send Reverend M. Peschard, his Vicar-General.

It was a very wise step, for apart from the pleasure it would give the Bishop she knew that this ecclesiastic would not have much influence over the Community, as he was living in Bayeux. Complete success crowned this stratagem, even beyond her fondest hopes, for after the deposition was over he was obliged to return to Bayeux, and Bishop de Lorraine wrote to defer the election until after the feast of Corpus Christi, adding that then he would be able to preside at it himself, accompanied by Reverend M. Peschard. During the interval, he wished to continue the powers of the two almoners as formerly, and all this proved that his regard for the monastery was great. We have said that it was at that time he permitted the faithful to be associated to the Confraternity of the Sacred Hearts.

Under those painful circumstances Reverend M. Halley, confessor of the Religious, gave a touching proof of his attachment. A benefice of 3,000 francs was offered him in the diocese of Chartres; but he preferred to remain director of the nuns than accept this rich benefice; he would not take anything from the Sisters but a meagre salary of five hundred francs. If he knew how impossible it was for the Community to find another confessor, who was not a Jansenist, he was not ignorant that his attachment to sound doctrine would some day or another expose him to the severity of his Bishop, and hinder him from continuing his ministerial functions in the Community. Notwithstanding all these considertions he did not hesitate, but wished to partake in all their trials, and aid them to pass through that violent tempest.

When Bishop de Lorraine arrived in Caen, Reverend M. Halley, in the name of the Religious, went again to ask him to preside at their election. Of course they would prefer him to Reverend M. Peschard, who was a true sectarian. For if the Bishop went against the Constitution *Unigenitus*, at least he had accepted it before his consecration, and his natural goodness made it easier to treat with him.

His Lordship accepted at once, and wished to go to the convent that same day. Mother M. of Saint Catherine Blouet de Camilly was unanimously elected. The prelate showed how pleased he was with this union, and consented to visit in detail all the convent and the other buildings. During the greater part of the time some of the Sisters entertained the Vicars-General, while others spoke confidingly to the Bishop, and deftly proposed to him to be their superior himself. Reverend M. Peschard, having heard the request, was alarmed, and begged the Bishop to refuse at once, alleging the numerous occupations that would naturally prevent him from fulfilling such a charge, but the new Mother Superior replied very brightly and quickly to this insidious objection: "Oh, my Lord! do not refuse us; we will be very reasonable, and will not overburden you." Overcome by his desire of obliging them he graciously accepted. The following day he gave Confirmation to some of the boarders and Penitents, signed all the general permissions, and granted all the favors that were asked. From that time this prelate spoke very highly, and with much affection, of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity, although they did not belong to his faction, but simply because peace reigned among them, and all were animated by the same sentiments.

Mother Blouet kept her word, and did not trouble him much about the affairs of the monastery. She was very careful to keep on his right side, and so her Community escaped, one can almost say quite miraculously, the troubles and persecutions which at that time agitated all the other Communities. The Blessed John Eudes had always been the declared enemy of Jansenism; from the height of Heaven he was watching over his children, and so helped them through the turmoil of Jansenistic intrigues. This protection has been so powerful that his two Institutes have been preserved from that heresy so contrary to the love of the Divine Heart of Jesus.

The Seminary of Caen did not so easily escape the persecutions of this sect as did the Sisters; their fury was directed principally against that house and also against the Jesuit Fathers. The seminarians were taken away from the Eudists, and placed in the seminaries of Bayeux and of the Deliverance, or some other congregation that showed itself more amenable to the Jansenistic influence.

In order not to be obliged to return to the subject of the unfortunate episcopate of Bishop de Lorraine we shall only say that his last public act was the signing of the protestation against the Council of Embrun, where the most ardent among the appellant Bishops, M. Soanen, Bishop of Senez, had been condemned and suspended. Some months after this last-named scandal Bishop de Lorraine died in Paris, on June 9, 1728, at the age of sixty-three years.

A historian more kind than hostile to the Jansenists, M. Pluquet, has borne this judgment against him:

> M. de Lorraine was a sincere Jansenist, and detested the Jesuits most heartily. His restless mind and his excitable brain put the diocese aflame. They only wanted appellants or priests of that sect; they ran after the partisans of the Bull; all wrangling and disputes took the color of the fire and flame that surrounded the people of the diocese; all the trouble and the drilling, warrants, summonses and judgments that could be invented kept the people in a whirl of anxiety. During that troublesome time a janitor was assigned as an orthodox priest, in order to administer the rites to a dying Jansenist; a sergeant, with two of his followers, forcibly dragged one, Father Cordelier, into the Benedictine Convent, to say the Office there.

The spiritual troubles from the commencement of this episcopate were accompanied by temporal losses, which were very sensibly felt by the Community. From the month of

February, 1720, to the end of the superiority of Mother Hellouin, the Community had been building—that is, they made a commencement, but could not finish it for several reasons. The monastery counted only twenty cells, which had been built in 1688; the Mistresses of the Penitents had to take their repast with them, as the refectory of the Community was too small; it was really imperative that they should build, to enlarge the regular places. They then resolved to continue the large building commenced thirty years previous. But when they were nearly finished the depreciation of bank bills, under the ministry of the Law of Adventure, joined to other considerable losses, put the Sisters in a sorry plight. Mother Blouet then proposed to them to economize regarding the food, and this was done in such a way that it is difficult to reconcile it with human prudence. However, there was not a complaint nor a murmur against this measure, and what is still more edifying, not a murmur was heard about the badly-conducted arrangements that had occasioned those losses. Some providential donations permitted them at the expiration of one year to put an end to these privations.

In 1721, the Reverend P. Costil made a present to the Sisters that was considered very precious to them, pious souvenirs that would always remain in their possession. This present consisted of two statues of the Blessed Virgin which had been held in great veneration by the holy founder. One of these was a splendid piece of sculpture, representing the Virgin Mary seated, and holding her Divine Infant on her bosom. This statue had been always on the desk of the good Father, and it was to her that he always had recourse. It was at the feet of this statue that he paid his homage to our Lady, thanking her for the success of his missions, and which he was pleased to honor by making his ordinary devotions before it, or when meditating on the Mystery of the Incarnation. This precious souvenir happily escaped the fury of the Revolution, and is to be found at the present day in the monastery.

The second statue was made of wax, and could not be preserved. The august Virgin was represented as reposing in her cradle. The Blessed had the custom of exposing it in his oratory during the octave and on the feast of the Nativity. It is said that he composed a book entitled: "The Admirable

Infancy of the Mother of God." He often meditated on the pages before this little image. It was before it, also, that he was inspired to compose the Mass and the Office of her holy infancy.

The Sisters turned out processionally, singing hymns and canticles, in order to receive these statues honorably. One of the Sisters exercised her ingenuity in putting into verse the sentiments of the holy founder in regard to the two statues. The wax statue was given to the novitiate, and the novices carried it processionally to the ante-choir during the feast and octave of the Nativity. The other was immediately placed in the spot it occupies to this day, and is still the object of great veneration among the Sisters. They remarked that this precious gift coincided with certain consignments of provisions that sufficed the Community for one whole week, and this happened at the time of their greatest need. They used to carry this statue to the refectory during mealtime, a practice which they sometimes observe still, particularly on grand feasts.

It was after the recital of these facts that the Annals of the monastery have inserted in their pages a long letter from the Right Reverend Bishop de Belzunce, in which he himself recounts to the Sisters the awful affliction of the pestilence in Marseilles, his vow to the Sacred Heart, and the miraculous cessation of the terrible scourge. This letter of December 3, 1722, makes a part in the history of the devotion to the Sacred Heart; we, therefore, have no scruple in reproducing it in its entirety. Unhappily, the Annals do not inform us how this apostolate of the Blessed John Eudes had become known to the Bishop. Perhaps he had requested some information concerning it through the books of the monastery. If it is true that the holy Bishop arranged the feast for the Friday after the Octave of the Blessed Sacrament, to conform to the revelations made to the Blessed Margaret Mary, it is not the less clear that this Blessed was not the only person that inspired the devotion to the Sacred Heart. We believe that it was from these two sources that this beautiful devotion was spread through the entire world.

The length of this letter proves the desire that actuated this good prelate was to give pleasure to those to whom he addressed it.

Madame:—I bless God that He has inspired the Reverend J. Eudes to establish a Congregation as holy as yours, and for having consecrated it particularly to the Divine Heart of Jesus I believe, Madame, that I cannot better testify my gratitude to your holy Community for the kindness shown me in the letter I have just received than to give you a detailed account, and as short as it will be possible for me to make it, regarding the marvelous favors operated in our behalf, while at the same time it will serve as a means to strengthen and augment your confidence in the infinite mercies of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

You are aware, Madame, that the most frightful scourge that has ever been heard of, a ravaging pestilence that has exceeded anything known in science, afflicted Marseilles in 1720. In less than no time contagion and death invaded every house of this great city, which is one of the largest and most thickly populated in the Kingdom; we did not expect it, we were the first attacked and we had no precedent to follow; we had to do for every one attacked as best we could. Our sins being, without doubt, more enormous than those of our neighbors, in a few days houses were filled with dead and dying; and the fear of contagion made them put the sick out on the streets which were without exception, full of dying and dead. This, as you can well imagine, presented a woeful spectacle. The number of corpses were too numerous to be buried; they were cast around on the pavement; they were devoured by dogs; they caused a most insupportable stench around; we often had to pass them by to bring salvation to the dying who were calling for aid, and in doing so we were obliged to walk over the mouldering corpses ,which were sickening to behold.

In the desolation in which I found myself, Madame, I made vows and novenas, but without any result; God did not seem to hearken to my pleadings. Finally, I took the resolution to make the Honorable Amends to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, outraged by the sins of mankind, and to consecrate my diocese and my flock to this most Sacred Heart, as well as to establish a feast of precept in its honor, which I set for the Friday following the octave of the feast of Corpus Christi, the day our Lord appointed formerly to a holy Religious as being the day He wished consecrated to Him in reparation for the sacrilege committed against Him in this Holy Sacrament of love. I gave my order on October 22d, and at once we saw a great diminution of the evil.

On the feast of All-Saints I assembled all my clergy, and ordered all the bells of the city to be rung, something unheard for a long time, as the awful condition of things rendered us heart-broken; besides, all the churches had been closed since August 24th. After the example of Saint Charles I headed, like him, a very lugubrious procession—sighs, tears and sobs bursting forth as steadily as they walked. I went up to the top of a large commons, which is a very fine place, in fact, the most spacious in the vicinity of this large city, and arranged an altar there; the novelty of the spectacle made every one forget the fear of an hour ago—which, of course, was the fear of contagion—and the people ran thither from all parts. surrounding the altar as though there were no question of fear or contagion.

Seeing around me such an enormous throng of people I mounted a bench, from which eminence I exhorted my flock to have recourse to penance. Truly, God inspired me at the moment with the words proper to rouse their flagging spirits; I besought them to join with me in appeasing the wrath of a justly irritated God, and I would consecrate them all, as well as the whole diocese, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I then made the Honorable Amend for my own sins, as well as those of my people; I made the Act of Consecration of our persons, our hearts, of our town and of my diocese to the Heart of Jesus; I then said Mass, during which I had the consolation of giving Holy Communion to several persons. The Heart of Jesus, Madame, was touched with the tears that were shed during that sorrowful but holy ceremony. At first He made it known that it was agreeable to Him; for a violent wind, that we call the *mistral,* whistled with continuous violence the whole morning; in fact, it was so rough at times that I thought we would be obliged to defer the ceremony; but it ceased absolutely for a time, and this lull permitted the procession of penance to form; it was long and slow, for the march was truly a penitential one. Remember, all this time which dragged into an hour at least, the wind had ceased; I preached quite a long sermon, made many acts of reparation, said Mass, and published my order, by which action I established the feast of the Sacred Heart. All this time the atmosphere was so calm that not a candle flickered on the altar, and this altar was placed at the intersection of four streets, which, ordinarily speaking, would produce a whirl, but not one was quenched, nor was even a drop of wax to be seen trickling; the candles burned as brightly and nicely as if they were inside of a church that was well guarded from draughts, or through which no breath of air could penetrate; as soon as the ceremonies were over the wind commenced again with renewed fury, so extraordinary as to destroy many boats on the rivers.

People of little faith murmured, saying that next day there would be a fearful havoc among them; there would be numbers dying and dead; but God, in His mercy, ordained otherwise, and from that day the number of both steadily decreased and so continued.

Our churches being closed for some time I made, some months later, a solemn novena in the church of the pious

Capuchins. Every morning after I said Mass I carried the Blessed Sacrament to the church door processionally, and gave benediction to the people who had assembled in a large square; every evening I brought an altar, already dressed, to the door where I said Mass in the morning, and where we sang the Litany of the Sacred Heart; I then renewed the Act of Honorable Amend, and of Consecration, and exhorted the faithful, who came in crowds every morning, to receive Communion, which I distributed in the same place, being obliged to do this during the raging pestilence; in the evening they came to hear the word of God, and receive benediction, with the same feeling one would have at the moment of death, for the consternation was general; death might claim them victims at any moment; all this indiscriminate intercourse among the people never caused the slightest inconvenience.

The day of the feast of the Sacred Heart being come there was on the eve, and on the day itself, a general tolling of the bells of the city. I officiated pontifically, and in the evening I had a general procession formed, in which all the Religious and clergy of the city assisted, even those who do not usually figure in processions outside; all the Chapter of the Cathedral, vested in copes, preceded the Blessed Sacrament which I carried in state; and I can tell you, Madame, that it was truly a triumph for Jesus Christ. All the streets were carpeted, the magnificence of the people's offerings and the outpouring of their wealth to do credit to their city was wonderful, especially after such a fearful calamity. From the moment the Blessed Sacrament left the church until it reached the harbor the noise of the drums never ceased, and when we arrived at the port the cannons boomed from the fortress as a salutation to the Heavenly Guest; in the harbor the galleys, the boats and smaller vessels clanged forth their welcome that was significant; there was the flourishing of trumpets, and the shrill yet dulcet notes of the hautboy, the tambourines and the sweet yet sad melody of the violin filled the air with such a subdued medley of music as to thrill the listeners and happy spectators with a heavenly awe; in fine, nothing earthly could have been more beautiful.

I had an altar arranged in the same place as on the day of All-Saints. I made again the Honorable Amend, and renewed our consecration before giving Benediction to that vast throng of people. Before we left the church the wind blew just as violently as it did on the former occasion, yet the galleys flew their standards and flags; the wind could not tear them. However, it ceased as we left the church, the galleys resumed all the other ornaments, and the torches continued to burn without a flicker; the candles on the altar were as innocent, as on the previous occasion, of a single inclination to part with a mite of the wax that burned only for the glory of Him Whom they honored on that particular day. When we approached my Cathedral to reenter, after the procession was ended—it had lasted three hours—the wind returned with such velocity that we were obliged to remove the canopy over the Blessed Sacrament, as it could not be carried. These are the circumstances, wonderfully striking, indeed, and they proved to me that God was satisfied with our gratitude to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, our Divine Liberator from an awful scourge.

I omit, Madame, all the other ceremonies that we had that day for the same intention, while I return to this last one. At the commencement of the month of May of this year 1722 the pestilence reappeared in Marseilles, but God remembered that we were consecrated to the adorable Heart of Jesus Christ; the Father only struck us to bring back to Himself His ungrateful children who, nevertheless, are still very dear to Him, even though they persecute Him by their infidelities and ingratitude. This second reappearance of the pestilence gave great fear, but it was in a much lighter form; all fled; very few remained in the city. I thought it my duty to engage our sheriffs to make a vow to the Sacred Heart, and I exhorted them by all the arts of my persuasive powers to do so; at length they acceded to my request, and did as I begged them to do. After a solemn deliberation we met together on the feast of the Blessed Sacrament in our Cathedral; I knelt at the foot of the altar before going in procession, holding the Remonstrance in my hands. The first sheriff advanced, and made a vow to the Sacred Heart, which consisted of a promise made for themselves and their successors in perpetuity to go on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and communicate in the church of the First Monastery of the Religious of the Visitation of this city, and to offer there in reparation for the crimes committed in Marseilles an immense candle of white wax, ornamented with the escutcheon of the city, which candle should be burned on that day in the said church, where I shall establish the perpetual adoration to the Sacred Heart, and to assist in the evening at a general procession of thanksgiving to the Heart of Jesus Christ, that I will establish in perpetuity, according to their request, after they pronounce their vow.

The procession was composed simply of the clergy in surplice, each holding a candle—the people were forbidden to follow on account of the danger of contagion—we left the church; I gave Benediction in all the streets, and at the Repository of the Hotel-de-ville. We then commenced a general novena through the whole city, and fasted very austerely on the vigil—that is to say, on bread and water. The prohibition imposed on the people of not following the procession could not stop them; they admired our modest procession, and joined us, although the contagion was extreme; yet, there was not one complaint made, nor one case of contagion reported.

On the feast of the Sacred Heart, as I had forbidden the exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament, we not only gave Benediction, but, as I had ordered by my mandamus, we had an altar magnificently adorned on a platform, which was on a prominence and above the Church of the Accoules, from where they had a full view of the country, and nearly the whole city. I carried the Blessed Sacrament there, according to the order I had given; presently, the bells of the Accoules rang out to warn all the faithful to come to prayer; I made, from this high spot above the church, a short exhortation, then a new Honorable Amend, and finally came the multiplied noises of bells and the booming of cannon from the fortress and the galleys; then I gave Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament to the four quarters of the city and country.

Madame, I have never seen a more beautiful or a more touching spectacle: the space in front of the Church of the Accoules, the streets bordering it and the roofs of all the houses were covered with people, attracted more through devotion than curiosity. It was June 12th, and I can assure you, as well as the doctors, that from the end of that month the pestilence was completely routed. From the 12th day of June it diminished so sensibly that people cried out at the prodigy. From that time we knew of no one that died, nor of any one falling sick of any disease, and it was a rare thing to have to bring the Holy Viaticum to the sick.

I have forgotten to mention, Madame, that on the morning of the day of the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus our sheriffs came ceremoniously to the church of the Religious of the Visitation, where I said Mass; they offered there, according to their vow, the large candle of white wax in reparation for the sins committed in the city, and I offered two, one in reparation for my own sins, and the other for those persons of the city who are consecrated to God. We justly attribute the cause of this relapse to a sacrilege in the church of the Observantines two months previous. The holy Ciborium, full of sacred Hosts, had been stolen; later on the Ciborium was returned to me, but without the sacred Hosts. This frightful sacrilege plunged me into the deepest sorrow, and I forgot nothing that I thought capable of appeasing the wrath of God for this desecration.

We made a general procession on March 25th, at which I assisted, and that day all the clergy fasted rigorously, eating nothing until sun-down; our humiliations did not appease the anger of God, Who wished to punish us, and thus render more glorious the goodness and power of the adorable Heart of Jesus.

I believe, Madame, that I have given you pleasure by these details; I have stated them simply, just for your Community alone, and at the same time I pray you not to show this letter to others, as I do not want it to be made public. Let us be united, Madame, in the Divine Heart of Jesus, and ask Him for each other that our names may be written in the Book of Life. I have a singular respect for your house, and it is impossible for me not to be attached to a Community devoted and consecrated, as yours is, to the Sacred Heart.

It is in these sentiments that I have the honor to be, Madame,

Your very humble and obedient servant,
HENRY, *Bishop of Marseilles.*

The end of the second superiority of Mother Blouet was saddened by the successive deaths of several Sisters. Their names declare them to have been some of those whose families were most devoted to the Blessed founder, such as Neuilly de Fontaine, a relation of his second successor; de Quetissent, daughter of M. de Quetissent, who loaned him the title to buy the first house of his Congregation. It was one proof more of his reputation for sanctity. Many years after his death his sanctifying influence continued over Christian families.

The last fact belonging to that epoch was the conversion of a young Protestant who had come to the boarding school. To enter into the bosom of the Catholic Church this young lady generously sacrificed her rich inheritance.

Mother M. of Saint Catherine Blouet was deposed at the Ascension, 1726, and Mother M. of Saint Isidore was elected in her place. On June 6th Reverend P. Creully, superior of the seminary, confirmed her election; nothing indicates that he had any title. While Bishop de Lorraine lived he remained superior of the monastery; the Eudists were in complete disgrace with him. However, we know that Father Creully was personally liked by the Bishop, although he was as firm as his brethren in regard to the doctrines of Jansenism, and that only the favor with which he looked upon him permitted him to render signal service to the Sisters of the Good Savior; in fact, he was considered by them as a second founder, after the death of Father Herambourg.

CHAPTER V

DEATHS OF SISTER M. OF SAINT AUGUSTINE LE BOUCHER AND MOTHER M. OF SAINT ISIDORE HELLOUIN

AT the time of the new election of Mother Hellouin the novitiate was quite numerous, for death decimated the Community during her government, and, nevertheles, the vacancies were filled up. Those families exempted from Jansenism naturally favored the vocation of their children to an Order that remained sheltered from that heresy, and the divisions engendered by it.

We shall occupy ourselves only with Sister M. of Saint Augustine le Boucher, deceased on April 30, 1728. She merits particular mention, for it is to the work of this Religious that all the principal documents of this history are due. The Preface of the Annals tells us how the superiors charged her with the work, the care she took to collect all the memoirs of those who had preceded her, and in particular Sister M. of Saint Colombe, her investigations through all the monastery papers, her questions of the ancient Sisters, and finally her relations with Reverend P. Costil, who at that time was writing the life of the Blessed John Eudes and the history of his Congregation. Death claimed her while she was writing the Annals up to the year 1713. The notices of the Sisters appear to extend to the year 1720. She had lived a long time with the contemporaries of the holy founder, and in particular with Mother Herson, his niece.

Sister M. of Saint Augustine did not receive an official obedience to undertake this history until March 1, 1722, and consequently could only apply herself to it for six years. Her writings proved that she had a decided facility for it, a great spirit of order and the true instinct of an historian. She understood the value of fragments, knew how to place them so as to obtain an interesting whole, and did not multiply them without serious motives. Her style is superior to that of the Annalists who succeeded her.

After having bespoken the gratitude of the Institute for her work which she did so well, we shall say something concerning her religious life. The reading of the Flowers, written by herself, would alone suffice to show the great progress she made in perfection, and also how deeply she was penetrated with the spirit of the Order. Her pen-pictures of the different characters and their religious virtues are so cunningly printed that one might almost fancy they were familiar beings. Only long exercise can give this exquisite finish to monastic literature. However, her biography written by her successor gives us some interesting details.

Madame du Homme le Boucher, mother of Sister M. of Saint Augustine, was left a widow shortly after the birth of this her only child. Her life in the world was so saintly that later on her daughter, by order of her superiors, wrote her life. This memoir of her mother was quite considerable, and gave many indications regarding the manners of those times. Unfortunately it has been lost.

With such a pious mother, and brought up under her own wing, the education of her child was necessarily as Christian as it was possible to be. Quite early her dispositions bade fair to acquire eminent virtue; but the frequent need of a servant in the family, and one that was found out only too late to have been worthless and bad, threatened to effect by her bad counsels the good seed sown by a saintly if indulgent mother. The preparation for her First Communion opened the child's eyes to her peril, and she immediately broke with the person who would soon ruin her totally, and came back to her former state. However, this girl was later converted by the good example of the child. It was in the monastery that Mlle. le Boucher accomplished this great action, at the age of ten and a half years. From that moment she felt that God had called her, or was calling her, to the religious life, but many years passed by before she had the generosity to respond.

Sometime after this event her mother placed her with the Ladies of the Propagation of the Faith, to finish her education; these Ladies belonged to Caen. In the beginning the pious child tasted nothing but sweetness in the service of God; so when they said before her that each one had a cross to carry she could not help crying out: "Then I am the only one that has none to carry." Intimate relations with a companion that was much taken up with the pleasures of the world, and loved the fashions thereof, destroyed the happiness that was so far unclouded, and made the rest of her life subject to bitter assaults.

Her pious mother saw the change with deep grief, for she ambitioned the happiness of the religious life for her only child; that life, indeed had been that mother's ardent hope and desire when she was a girl, but her parents had deprived her of it. So her prayers grew more fervent when she saw her darling child resolve to contract engagements in the world. God heard her prayers as he heard those of Saint Monica. "One day," said Sister M. of Saint Augustine, "I saw a multitude of sins of which I was guilty, and the Eternal Father in His glory holding a sword with two glittering blades, ready to strike me and engulf me in an awful abyss that I saw opening beneath my feet. Then the Blessed Virgin presented herself before Him, and reached out her arm to arrest the stroke that was about to destroy me, supplicating Him to have a little more patience with me. I remained eight days under the impression this made upon me."

But she did not give up the world yet. She was stricken with small-pox, which destroyed her beauty forever. It was a new warning sent her from a God Who loved her well. However, the reading of good books during the term of her convalescence, and the wise counsels of her mother, were sufficient to destroy the last links that bound her to the world. After having for a short time hesitated about entering the Carmelites, Mlle. le Boucher chose Our Lady of Charity, through zeal for the salvation of souls. Her director, Father Corneille, who died in the odor of sanctity among the Eudists later on, contributed in deciding her towards this step.

As her youth did not permit her to regulate her temporal affairs, and as the vow of poverty, then so solemn and excluding all property or its usufruct, could not be made until everything was definitely arranged, she had to remain three years as a simple postulant. We do not know if during that time she had been under the direction of Father Corneille; her great mortifications remind us of this priest, and we can easily believe she was under his care. She mortified her sense of taste to the very limit; to overcome and do penance for her past delicacy (pardon us this detail) she condemned herself to swallow infected expectoration, after having kept it a long time in her mouth.

God, to prove her fidelity, permitted that she would be subjected to most humiliating temptations, and these took a variety of forms; at the same time He willed that she should have a clear presentiment of all the sufferings of body and mind that she had to endure to the end of her life. Her generosity was always noble, nothing disturbed her, and gradually great consolations succeeded those violent combats, and made her better understand the ineffable happiness of loving and serving God.

After her reception of the habit a temptation of despair overwhelmed her; it seemed to her clouded fancy that nothing she did or could do would be acceptable to God, because her vocation was not conformable to His Divine Will. A Jesuit Father had told her at one time that she ought to remain in the world, since her life was an eminently Christion one; now, at this opportune time for the advantage of the enemy of souls, the remembrance of this decision caused her much interior trouble. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. Madame le Boucher being a penitent of Father Corneille acquainted him with the battle that was waging in the mind of her daughter. Instead of being surprised at such an apparent unhappy condition of the poor Religious, when he met her he addressed to her these words, more fitted to augment her troubles than decrease them if we judge from a human standpoint: "Well, now what is it all about? You might, perhaps, suffer all your life the agony of a damned soul. But to be saved all you need is to be generous." Instead of discouraging her, these words calmed her perturbed mind and soul.

But the able director did not rest satisfied in encouraging her in this way; he wished to probe into her soul, in order to find out why she was subjetced to this particular temptation, and he deftly discovered that Sister M. of Saint Augustine had a particular attachment to a novice whom she had helped by paying her dowry. After having arraigned herself at the bar of the confessional, she applied herself to destroy this affection by the use of the hammer of holy indifference to this young companion. She overcame it by degrees, and though she was obliged to ask pardon of her, saying in all humility: "I am very unfortunate, and cannot correct myself of one defect without falling into another." Her conduct was the same in regard to a cousin of hers who had taken the habit the year she died. During a retreat she perceived that her affection for this relation was too sensible; she presently ceased speaking with her. A Sister wished to make her scrupulous regarding this silence on her part, but she replied: "God will take care of her; He knows better how to content the human heart than His creatures."

This soul, so well fortified against legitimate affection, was incapable of the least resentment. Often after receiving contradiction she was heard say: "Sister had no intention of hurting my feelings; if she had I would have pardoned her at once, and my peace of heart would not suffer in the least. In whatever pain or trouble that may be my portion I need only turn my heart towards God to regain my tranquillity, then I remember it no longer."

Here is one of those heroic acts of charity such as is frequently found in the Monasteries of Our Lady of Charity; this was performed in regard to a Penitent: Sister M .of Saint Augustine suffered much from a disease of the liver; she was inspired to ask for her cure through the intercession of the Blessed Eudes, for whom she cherished a deep veneration; for she often had reason to thank him for timely assistance. She had an interior assurance that she would be heard and answered when, during Mass at the moment of the Consecration, grace seemed to pour into her soul, and with it she felt an eager desire to sacrifice her own health for the salvation of a poor wicked Penitent who, although in her agony, absolutely refused to go to confession. Imagine her consolation when, Mass being over, she learned that the Penitent had changed completely; greater still was her joy when, some time after, she saw her die in true sentiments of faith and repentance. Her own infirmities remained, and very often they were terrific, notwithstanding her simplicity and her excessive fear of exaggeration in words; she said that sometimes the violence of her sufferings would be known only on Judgment Day.

We feel that we must hasten our narrative, fearing we might pass the limits allotted us, and only speak of a few edifying traits in which she showed her spirit of poverty, of obedience and mortification. The Community founded on her the greatest hopes, for they saw how well she acquitted herself of all her employments, when it pleased God to recompense her sacrifice. One day, on leaving the confessional, she was stricken with apoplexy, which at once deprived her of speech, and deprived her of the happiness of communicating, notwithstanding the lively desire she manifested to receieve the Holy Viaticum. She expired after eighteen hours of agony on April 30, 1728.

Sister M. of Saint Augustine was perfectly acquainted with the archives of the monastery. She had always defended the second edition of the Constitutions and had written many memoirs in their favor. Mother M. of Saint Isidore, on the contrary, had always sustained the ancient Constitutions; but some weeks after the death of this Sister a complete change came over this respected Mother. She saw her error, and desired to make a public reparation for it in the Chapter. Mother Blouet was the first to dissuade her from this, so as not to reawaken the affair, unknown to so many of the Sisters. Mother M. of Saint Isidore at least wrote several letters to the other houses of the Order in regard to it, and she solicited an attestation from M. de Pibrac, to prove that Bishop de Nesmond had given his sanction to the new Constitutions. This act bears the date of June 11, 1728. This astonishing change was attributed to the prayers of Sister M. of Saint Augustine.

The Community received another proof of the happiness she enjoyed in heaven. Reverend P. Costil and Sister M. of Saint Augustine had been strictly confidential, and were very united at their work, which was common to both. Not content to pray for the repose of her soul this Father wished to know if she was saved, and consulted a holy soul on this subject, as he himself recounted to Sister M. of Saint Placide Moulin. In his writings he shows how difficult it was for him to believe in supernatural occurrences; this disposition gives more authority to the following letter:

My very dear Sister:

The friendship which God was pleased to permit between the Reverend Mother M. of Saint Augustine and myself having urged me to consult Almighty God on her state, through a person who is very spiritual and well accustomed to treat with His Divine Majesty, here is what she replied to me on the 22d of this month, of May: "This Religious has great defects, and she made our Lord wait a long time for her. He was obliged to bestow many sensible graces on her to attract her to His service; but she corresponded thereto with great fidelity. Her purity was eminent, and rendered her capable of doing great things for His glory. However, as she had not arrived at that degree of the supernatural life that grace demanded of her, that her conversation, although apparently very spiritual, was not yet pure enough, she had to remain sixty-two hours in Purgatory, and is at present in Glory."

You will kindly remark that this person never saw Mother M. of Saint Augustine, and that all this she learned in prayer. I send it to you that you may make whatever use you please of it.

I remain in our Lord, etc.

CAEN, May 22, 1728.

During the second triennial of Mother M. of Saint Isidore, Bishop de Lorraine was happily replaced by Right Reverend M. de Luynes. This prelate was only twenty-six years old when he took possession of his See in the month of December, 1722. His episcopate was a restorative one, because from the very first he showed himself submissive to all the decisions of the Sovereign Pontiffs. He governed the diocese until 1753, when he succeeded the Most Reverend Monsignor Languet in the Archiepiscopal See of Sens. Three years later he was created Cardinal by Pope Benedict XIV.

The children of the Blessed Eudes had only praise for his administration. He himself labored during the mission that was preached by the Eudists in his Cathedral. At his first visit to the monastery the Sisters perceived that he was favorably disposed to them. The absence of disagreement naturally pleased him, for he had to make painful efforts to pacify nearly all the other Communities where Jansenism had played such havoc, and cast its venom so deeply. Doubtless it was on this account that he chose this monastery in which to place a Religious who had need of being strengthened in her good resolutions. Success in this venture so far pleased him, and attached him yet more to the Sisters. At the death of the Abbot de Pibrac he easily yielded to their request to have Reverend M. Robinet, his Vicar-General, for their superior.

In this capacity this ecclesiastic presided at the deposition of Mother M. of Saint Isidore, and on May 29, 1732, at the election of Mother M. of Saint Catherine Blouet de Camilly.

Mother Hellouin only survived her deposition a few months. The reader knows her virtues. She persevered to the last. After her deposition, through her ardent zeal for the salvation of souls, her age not permitting her to be employed as mistress, she solicited the favor of being employed in teaching the Penitents how to work. She had a decided ability for this. Perhaps they would have yielded to her desire if death had not placed an insuperable obstacle.

The copious sweats to which she was subject did not hinder her from following the common exercises and of living with a mortification which did not permit her to accept any relief. A Sister, seeing her utterly exhausted, and suffocating with heat, so weak, indeed, as to be unable to speak, begged her to take a little refreshment, which the Rule authorized, and at least to do so out of compliment to the Sister that addressed her. Thus pressed to accept, Mother M. of Saint Isidore had to acknowledge that she had promised to God to deprive herself at all times of this satisfaction, and she added: "Many years ago I read in the life of a saint that the burning thirst he had to endure made the skin of his tongue fall off. I have not yet gone so far."

On the evening before she died the Sister Assistant anxiously besought her to go to bed. She replied: "That is as much as to say to the soldier that he must give up his arms in the hour of battle; it is to encourage a Religious to fail in her Rule at the end of her days. God will sustain me to the end; I beg of you to allow me to remain. Nature is very soft-hearted, and it tries to profit in every way; now it is age that it would urge to take life easy. We ought to be happy to die, after having done something for God. The more pain, my dear Sister, the more merit."

She then assisted at Matins, and every one remarked her fervor; she kept up the choir that evening on her side. It was to be her last effort; for the next morning the Sister, who usually went to awake her, found her unconscious. Sister M. of Saint Isidore never recovered consciousness. The Community had the sorrow to lose her on December 5, 1731. For fifty-four years she bore the yoke of the Lord. The three last years of the life of the Blessed Eudes corresponds with her entrance into the novitiate.

CHAPTER VI

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1734 AND REVISIONS OF THE CONSTITUTIONS AND CUSTOM-BOOK—BRIEF AND APPROBATION OF BENEDICT XIV—DEATH OF MOTHER M. OF SAINT CATHERINE BLOUET DE CAMILLY

SOON after her election Mother M. of Saint Catherine occupied herself with the urgent affairs regarding the Constitutions. Immediately after the death of Bishop de Lorraine, the memoir of Father Costil and the consultation of the Doctors of the Sorbonne had been sent to the different houses of the Institute. The Annals tell us that the Eudist Fathers brought all their devotedness to this action, and attributed to them in great part the success it gained. Notwithstanding her activity Mother Blouet alone found great difficulty to bring it to a happy ending. The regulation of the Assembly was conformed to that which was practiced in the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. Bishop de Luynes gave his consent in writing for the reunion of the Assembly on July 2, 1734. Mother Blouet then wrote the letters of convocation to all the convents. All the superiors and deputies gathered in Caen in the beginning of October. The first days passed in prayer and conversation, and the principal points were discussed. In fine, on the ninth, all the members having been present, the Assembly was opened solemnly and regularly. Here are the names of the Religious present. We shall find them all in the particular history of each house:

FOR THE MONASTERY OF CAEN.

Mother M. of Saint Catherine Blouet de Camilly, Superioress.
Sister M. of Saint Basil de Montbenard, Assistant.
Sister M. of the Trinity Le Grand, Counsellor.
Sister M. of Saint Michael le Roux de Langrie, Counsellor.
Sister M. of Jesus du Lubois, Counsellor.

FOR THE MONASTERY OF RENNES.

Sister M. Seraphine Gardin, Counsellor and Deputy.
Sister M. of Saint Rose Menissier, Counsellor and Deputy.

FOR THE MONASTERY OF VANNES.

Mother M. of the Holy Trinity le Rebours, Superioress.
Sister M. of Jesus-Dying du Bois, Counsellor and Deputy.

FOR THE MONASTERY OF LA ROCHELLE.

Mother M. of the Ascension de la Valette, Superioress.
Sister M. of Saint John Baptist de la Valette.

FOR THE MONASTERY OF PARIS.

Mother M. of the Heart of Jesus de la Greve, Superioress.
Sister M. of the Ascension Chevalier, Assistant and Deputy.

The Archbishop of Tours and the Bishop of Treguir did not permit the superiors of the houses in their dioceses to go to Caen.

Father Martine, the author of the "Life of the Blessed Eudes," Superior of the Seminary of Coutances, and First Assistant of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, and Father Costil, annalist and historian of that Congregation, having been asked, lent the weight of their presence to the Assembly. Their labors put them in a proper position to give the most useful counsels. Father Martine said the Mass of the Holy Ghost, at which all the members received Holy Communion.

At the first meeting they verified the permissions, obediences and delegations, and they elected with one accord Mother M. of Saint Catherine as president. Her merit and her zeal for the good of the Institute, even more than her title of superioress of the first monastery, won her this distinction. Sister M. of the Ascension Chevalier, of the House of Paris, was elected secretary of the Chapter. She had performed these services in the different houses, and they were well aware of her talent and her facility for writing.

At first the Assembly was occupied with the Constitutions. Mother Blouet furnished all the original documents, and they were arranged as they are today. Mothers Blouet and de la Greve accepted the mission of having them approved by the Holy See.

The Custom-Book was the next object of discussion at the meeting. They were to retrench some articles that were not adapted to them; they were only proper to the Order of the Visitation. It was at that time that all the ceremonial of the choir was rendered conformable to the Roman rite. As far as we know the Institute never abandoned it in the process of time.

In all parts of the Custom-Book the Assembly made those changes and retrenchments that were judged requisite and more useful for the greater perfection of the religious life in the Institute. Its great aim was to conform to the intentions and last will of the Blessed institutor. His writings served as a sure guide throughout. Father Costil had collected a great number of manuscript notes left by him; his counsels, as well as those of Father Martine, were of the greatest use to the Sisters.

The Assembly finished all discussions on November 5th; everything seemed to have been happily settled; a Mass and Communion were offered in thanksgiving, and after the singing of the *Te Deum* all the deputies signed and approved all that had been done.

Some time after Mother Blouet sent the Acts of the Assembly to Bishop de Luynes. The prelate graciously answered them thus:

> I have examined the great work done in your Assembly, my dear daughter. I have especially remarked the deep wisdom with which it abounds; the light and spirit of God could alone render you capable of transacting such a business; it was not you that presided over those sessions—it was the Holy Spirit Who alone directed you. I shall give you my formal approbation whenever you wish, but I would advise you, first, before you finish it to practice your new arrangements for some time, in order to experience whether it is to the point, and to supply anything you may have forgotten. Besides, you will always find me ready to give you marks of my esteem for you and my veneration for your whole Institute.

This counsel was too wise not to be followed. It was only after four years of experience, in 1738, that the houses gave their Capitulary Act for a definite acceptance.

Steps were immediately taken in the Roman Court for the approbation of the Constitutions. It was Mother M. of the Heart of Jesus de la Greve, Superioress of Paris, who was charged with this, as she had made a number of friends for the Institute. The difficulties were not formidable. Cardinal de Tencin took the affair in hand, and brought it to a successful issue, notwithstanding the opposition of some Cardinals who were opposed to the Order. M. de Lezineau, expeditionary to the Roman Court, but an inhabitant of Paris, had also much to do towards this success, and proved himself so disinterested that he would not accept any remuneration; did not even ask the Sisters to give him anything previous to his journey. The House of Caen contributed the sum of three-hundred and seventy-six francs for this Brief.

It is dated September 26, 1741.

TRANSLATION OF THE BULL OF POPE BENEDICT XIV

UNTIL PERPETUAL REMEMBRANCE

Placed by the unspeakable abundance of the Divine clemency on the supreme throne of the Church Militant, it is always pleasing to us, when called upon, to confirm by our Apostolic authority, and to ratify and establish whatever is seen to be well adapted to give salutary guidance to those religious persons who under the sweet yoke of Christ and the rule of strict observance, are endeavoring to "render their vows to God," and to bring forth, by His heavenly grace, abundant fruit of good works. Our daughters beloved in Christ the Mothers Superior and Religious under the invocation of Our Blessed Lady, called "of Charity," of the Order of Saint Augustine, have lately caused to be laid before us that the aforesaid Institute, first founded many years ago in the town of Caen, in the diocese of Bayeux, was then propagated through many dioceses in the Kingdom of France, and was afterwards approved and confirmed by our predecessor Pope Alexander VII, of blessed memory, and on other occasions (as is set forth more fully in the letters of the same Alexander, our predecessor, similarly in the form of a Brief, of the second day of January, MDCLXVI, the tenor whereof we will to be sufficiently inserted and expressed by these presents). Moreover, Pope Innocent XI, of blessed memory, likewise our predecessor, by other letters, similarly in the form of a Brief, of the seventh day of May, MDCLXXXI, granted unto the aforesaid Institute that, in order to the making of the monastic vows all who might desire to be professed and to take the habit therein should have attained the age of seventeen years, and made other regulations, as is more fully set forth in like manner in the aforesaid letters of the same Innocent, our predecessor, the tenor of which we will to be fully and sufficiently set forth by these presents. Now, from the time of the above-named Alexander to the present time, for the more abundant profit and the better ruling of the aforesaid Institute, very many Constitutions having been made, whereof some have been altered to suit times and circumstances, and other Constitutions, more opportune and useful, have been substituted, the said Constitutions receiving the approbation of the Bishops in whose diocese the monasteries of the Institute existed; these present Constitutions having been recognized by the exponents, guided by long use and experience, to be salutary and very profitable, have been by them collected into one volume, and in the General Assembly of the said Order and Institute held in the Monastery of Caen in the aforesaid diocese of Bayeux, on the eleventh day of October, in the year MDCCXXXIV, were adopted for their own observance. In order, however, that the aforesaid Constitutions might possess greater authority and be more exactly observed, by receiving the approbation of Apostolic authority, they have addressed a humble petition to us to confirm them by our Apostolic authority. Wherefore, being desirous of showing special favor to the above-named exponents, and absolving them by these presents, and holding them as absolved, each and every one of them, from all ecclesiastical sentences, censures and penalties, of excommunication, suspension and interdict, and any others whatsoever, whether of the Law or of men, on whatever occasion, or from whatever cause, if they have incurred any —such absolution to be good for the purpose of the effects of those presents only—by the advice of our Venerable Brethren the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, interpreters of the Council of Trent, to whom we referred the petition which was presented to us, who have attentively weighed the report made by our beloved Son Peter de Tencin, Cardinal-Priest of the Holy Roman Church, deputed by them to examine the whole matter by our Apostolic authority, by these presents, WE APPROVE AND CONFIRM the Constitutions or Ordinances, or Statutes, made for the Institute of the aforesaid religious women, and IMPART TO THEM THE FIRMNESS OF INVIOLABLE APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY; saving, however, always in what is here said the authority of the Congregation of the aforesaid Cardinals; decreeing that these Constitutions or Ordinances or Statutes, and the present Letters, be and about to be firm, valid, and effective, and have and obtain their full and complete effect, and be inviolably observed by all and singular who are concerned and shall in future be concerned; and that all judges, ordinary or delegated, even the Auditors of Causes of the Apostolic Palace, so judge and define; and that whatever may be done or attempted to the contrary in these matters, knowingly or ignorantly, by any authority whatsoever, be held void and of no effect. All things to the contrary, notwithstanding.

Given at Rome, at Saint Mary Major, under the Ring of the Fisherman, on the twenty-sixth day of September, MDCCXLI, the second year of our Pontificate.

Cardinal Passionei.

On the back is written:

Rene Lezeneau, advocate, Royal Counsellor, agent of the Court of Rome, residing in Paris, Rue des Macons, near the Sorbonne, has caused the foregoing Brief to be expedited and delivered.

We, the undersigned, advocates of Parliament, Royal

Counsellors, agents of the Court of Rome, residing in Paris, certify that the present Brief is authentic and original, well and duly expedited in the said Court of Rome; in faith of which we have given our signatures.

PARIS, October 16, 1741.

RAUSNAY.
LEZINEAU.

Passed at Paris, October 16, 1741.

RAUSNAY.

This important favor was made known to Caen on October 19th, vigil of the feast of the Divine Heart of Jesus. It is remarkable with what respect this Brief was received by the Sisters. It was a proof of the inviolable attachment of this Community to the Holy See, especially in a time when its prerogatives, at least the most essential ones, were denied in France. The Chapter was immediately assembled and the Community sang the *Laudate* in thanksgiving. A vicar of Saint Etienne, charged with making the translation, wished to wear the Brief on his heart during the celebration of the Holy Mass, as a proof of his inviolable attachment to the Sovereign Pontiff, and to obtain for the Sisters the grace of fidelity to their holy engagements. The *Te Deum* was solemnly chanted, as well as the Office of the Sacred Heart. Presently the Community assembled to hear the reading of the Brief, and all the Sisters respectfully kissed the Keys, the coat-of-arms of the Pope imprinted on the vellum, to testify their ardent desire of observing exactly these Constitutions, which the Vicar of Jesus Christ assured them would be for them the sure way to heaven.

Mother Blouet did not have the consolation of seeing her persevering efforts thus nobly crowned. Her great age made her feel that death was approaching slowly but surely, still it did not slacken her ardor. On February 4, 1735, her Sisters, full of gratitude for all her devotedness, celebrated her Golden Jubilee of Profession. It was a true family feast. Reverend Father de la Porte, superior of the seminary, sang the Mass, and the whole day was dedicated to joy and happiness. In the month of June following this good Mother was deposed and reelected. Reverend Father Creuilly presided at the two ceremonies; Reverend M. Robinet, superior of the convent, had died a short time before in Paris.

Notwithstanding the infirmities that caused such great disquietude to the Sisters Mother Blouet applied herself with new zeal to fulfill the duties of her charge. "It is necessary," she said, "that I should repair all the faults that I have committed in my other terms of superiority." She endeavored to give satisfaction to every one; the least service excited her gratitude; the superiors obliged her to take the precautions necessary at her age and in her poor health, for her fervor continued to increase, and she would not otherwise permit herself the least dispensation or indulgence; she thought she must continue to be the first at every exercise, as formerly.

God, Himself, seemed anxious to console and recompense here below this holy Religious who had done so much for Him. On the feast of the Assumption, in the last year of her life, she appeared to be filled with an extraordinary joy, and eagerly looked forward to her death, in order to be able to see God. She confided her happy feeling to a Sister, and said to her: "I am not astonished at the recital of the raptures and ecstasies of holy persons; I really believe I had a taste of something similar today in meditation. The hour appeared only a minute to me; it seemed to me that I was in heaven, and that a voice assured me I would be there soon." After that, whenever she met that Religious, she would say: "Oh, how I desire to go to heaven! I hope it will be very soon. Oh, how good it is to serve God!"

Her lively faith hindered her from seeking those sensible consolations. She protested to our Lord that her only desire was to serve Him and to love Him for Himself, and not for His benefits. "Keep," she said with a charming simplicity, "those consolations for eternity, or give them to those who may need this attraction to follow you; as for me, I shall always be content to perform Thy holy Will."

It was with extreme joy that she saw the end of her superiority approach, especially so when she saw her place filled by the election of Sister M. of Saint Basil de Montbenard, one of her dearest pupils. From that time all thoughts were banished save those that reminded her of her last moments, and how to prepare for death. She had a great fear of death; even her great virtues did not take away that dread. However, a sudden death spared her at that last moment those dreadful fears of the judgment.

On July 25th Mother M. of Saint Catherine often repeated at recreation that she felt well; her joy gave much pleasure to the Sisters. Some of the Lay-Sisters having entered she called them to her, and gave many little tokens of affection as she had been wont to do when she was feeling real well. During that night a severe oppression came over her, almost to the verge of suffocation; in the morning the venerated Mother was brought to the infirmary. The doctor, being hastily called, answered immediately, and his diagnosis reassured the Community; he made a second visit in the evening. He had hardly left when she got worse, and expired before the confessor had finished giving her the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, on July 28, 1738.

Mother M. of Saint Catherine Blouet de Camilly was professed fifty-four years, and was seventy years and seven months old. The reader who recalls what we have said of her life may judge if she realized the prophecy of the Blessed Eudes, and if she was one of the principal pillars of the Order of Our Lady of Charity. Fifty-eight years had flown by since the precious death of the founder. We believe that Mother Blouet was the last ocular witness of his heroic virtues, especially was she the last who knew how to appreciate him; those who were still living were too young to remember him well before he died. Her long life and her long superiority were certainly great graces for the monastery. She was a living tradition of the spirit of the institutor, and of the first Mothers. All these reasons made her loss more sensible to the Community.

Mother de Montbenard, who succeeded her, died in 1776.

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CHAPTER VII

SUPERIORITY OF MOTHERS M. OF SAINT BASIL DE MONTBENARD, M. OF THE PRESENTATION VICAIRE, M. OF SAINT AUGUSTINE LABBE, AND M. OF SAINT ETIENNE DESFONTAINES—PROPHECY OF THE BLESSED JOHN EUDES ON THE FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS REALIZED

THE life of Mother M. of Saint Basil de Montbenard is a condemnation of liberty of conscience, that modern heresy, erected on the false principle of liberalism; it is also an astonishing proof of the transformation that can be effected by an able and pious director. Mlle. de Montbenard and her young sister were obstinate Calvinists, when Louis XIV, happily for them, placed them in the Convent of the New Catholics of Caen. Their resistance was difficult to overcome, but when that resistance was finally subdued grace triumphed, and their conversion was as durable as it was complete.

The younger wished to give herself to God in the Religious state. She with whom we are now occupied felt, on the contrary, a violent attraction for the world; in fact, it was invincible. Father du Desert, confessor of the two sisters, did not judge their vocation on these lines. He obliged the first to contract a marriage, which evidently was blessed by God, and she lived a pious life in the world. He told the second time after time that she could never save her soul except in the cloister, finally compelling her to enter in the name of obedience. Mlle. de Montbenard had just virtue enough to make her submit to this order. How many young persons of today would have the courage to conduct themselves as she did? A confessor who imposed such an order wished to make use of the authority he received from God to contradict tastes so weakly held, and very soon a change was wrought that pleased every one.

She entered the Order of Our Lady of Charity, although her parents remained sturdy Calvinists, notwithstanding her inclinations and natural views to the contrary; the postulant had violent battles to wage in her new undertaking. It even went so far that the poor child lost count of times, and places, and persons; she paid no attention to her surroundings, or those that lived with her. At the Office the book would fall out of her hands; she would remain sitting, completely absorbed, and she had to be reminded where she was—that she was following some exercise—before she came back to herself. Her director sustained her in all these combats; she made her profession, and showed herself always faithful to the duties of the religious life.

The success of Sister M. of Saint Basil in all the employments confided to her designated her, even while very young, as a faithful cooperator of her superiors and Sisters. In 1734, we have seen that she took part in the Assembly, as Assistant. First of all, she showed her zeal in the charge of the boarders and the Penitents. In this latter function her thirst for the salvation of the souls confided to her care had much need of being moderated. Her ability in finding means to mortify herself was extreme. During twenty years she never approached the fire. She often eagerly begged permission to follow her attraction for exterior penances, which her superiors only yielded to for fear that a refusal would cause her a greater mortification than all those she asked for so earnestly.

It was Mother M. of Saint Basil who received the Brief definitely approving the Constitutions. She celebrated, in 1741, the first centennial of the foundation of the monastery. These were her only joys. The Annals tell us that at that period the classes of the Penitents were very difficult to direct, and they relate strange incidents concerning them. One of them found some means of keeping her mistresses and her companions awake nights by an infernal racket. In 1743 an epidemic attacked nearly every one that lived in the monastery. They had at one time thirty-two in bed. Several Sisters died. Two or three had been fifty years professed, and belonged to the generation formed by Mother M. of the Nativity Herson and Mother M. of the Infant Jesus de Bois-David.

Sister M. of the Presentation succeeded Mother de Montbenard. In the world she had chosen Father Corneille as her director. It is said that her mortification was very great, almost excessive. Her government was not signalized by any important affair. Bishop de Luynes continued to be the superior of the monastery. Mother M. of the Presentation believed it her duty to unveil a novice without warning this prelate. He reproached her, but in such a sweet and gentle manner that it seemed more like the caress of a father; he also gave at the same time the following beautiful testimonial to the monastery: "You should not, my dear daughter, unveil a novice, and send her out of the house without consulting me beforehand. The thing is too important, for it is against all rules that I only learned of it when it had been an accomplished fact; and this seems all the more surprising that it has been done in a monastery such as yours, which is an example to others in everything."

Reelected in 1750 Mother M. of Saint Basil had the consolation of celebrating the centennial of the approbation of the Institute by Bishop Mole. It was solemnized by a triduum. Bishop de Luynes promised to officiate on the first day; as he was hindered from doing so, it was the M. le Cure of the parish that replaced him. The second day the Office was performed by the Eudists and their seminarians. Father Fontaine, superior, sang the Mass.

During the following years, the Annals relate that the Penitents showed great fervor, and that many of them were converted and were very faithful.

The reelection of Mother de Montbenard in 1753 was presided over by Bishop de Luynes. It was the last mark of sympathy given the monastery by this prelate, for he was transferred to the Archbishopric of Sens. This promotion was merited by his deep attachment to sound doctrines. In 1756 Pope Benedict XIV created him Cardinal. In 1761 he became one of the most ardent defenders of the Company of Jesus, and died only in 1738, dean of the French Bishops.

It was Monsignor de Rochechouart, Bishop of Evreux since the year 1734, that succeeded him. The new Bishop of Bayeux was well acquainted with the works of the Blessed Eudes, for the Seminary of Evreux had been founded by him and had continued to be directed by his children. At his first visit to the Sisters, on October 1, 1754, this prelate showed himself very amiable to them and, like his predecessor, he accepted the office of Superior to the Monastery.

At the end of the fourth triennial of Mother M. of Saint Basil, in 1756, we find elected for the first time Mother M. of

Saint Augustine Labbe who, at different times, governed the Community for fifteen years. From her earliest childhood marks of her future sanctity were observable in her, as in the lives of so many of the saints we read about. Her companions in the boarding school took her for their model, and in her presence did not dare to commit a single infraction of their rule. Her family showed a decided disinclination, even a violent opposition, to her becoming a Religious, which condition of affairs compelled her to remain three years and a half as a semi-postulant, without being able to receive the habit; even after her Clothing, the obstacles were not all removed; but nothing was capable of shaking her constancy, and the grace of profession was accorded her.

Notwithstanding her humility the Community recognized her talent for administration. She showed this especially in the charge of the econome. This employment furnished many occasions of showing her goodness of heart. Only the impossibility of satisfying them made her refuse what the Sisters demanded; every one was so delighted with her obliging manner: "Oh, that good charming econome!" Her gracious method of condescending to every one added a charm all its own to that which was given. "The goods of the house," she would say, "belongs to you as well as to me; I am only the depository and it is my duty to satisfy every one." Whenever she was nominated to that charge the Community rejoiced.

Her election to the superiority gave to Mother M. of Saint Augustine new occasions to signalize her goodness and her charity. A circular of 1757 speaks with enthusiasm of the happiness the Community enjoyed in being submissive to her law. The circulars of that time make known to us the state of the monastery. In general, it was composed of forty choir Sisters, and there were five or six novices in the novitiate. There were about twelve Lay-Sisters and two Tourieres. The boarding class varied between thirty and forty; the Penitents numbered between forty and fifty. About the year 1770 they increased a little, up to sixty.

The principal action during the superiority of Mother M. of Saint Augustine was to send two Sisters to Tours to aid in the formation of the novices. Sister M. of Saint Bernard Leblond had died there, and Sister M. of Saint Louis de Bernieres filled the charge of directress for three years. We might mention, also, a fire caused by the imprudence of a little boarder, which almost reduced the whole house to ashes. The Community was much tried by a number of deaths.

From 1762 to 1768 Mother M. of Saint Basil governed the Community for the last time. A circular of 1766, conserved at Rennes, closes textually:

> Monsignor, our prelate, on his return from Paris brought us a new consolation, and one very capable of giving us joy in the midst of our sorrows. Our good Queen has demanded that the Assembly of the Clergy establish throughout the Kingdom the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and it has been granted in the name of all the clergy. Although this Divine Heart has been a long time the particular treasure of the children of our worthy institutor we rejoice that very soon it will be known and honored by the whole world, *according to the prediction made by our good Father before his death.*
>
> It is to this Divine Heart that we have addressed ourselves for two years, to obtain peace and union between the two powers. Our very honored Mother, always burning with zeal for the glory of God, and for all that can tend to that end, made us undertake different practices of devotion every Friday; besides Holy Communion, which each one receives with holy avidity, we say the Litany of the Divine Heart in common, the *Miserere, Veni Creator,* the chaplet of the Holy Heart* and the Litany of the Saints . . .

The most striking point of this citation is the prediction attributed to the Blessed Eudes on the extension of the feast of the Sacred Heart. It is certain that the souvenir and the tradition are conserved in the Institute. His enemies were well acquainted with this prophecy, and reproached him by their culpable libels. The echo of this prophecy was even heard

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*The chaplet of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is composed of five decades, and instead of the Credo the following prayer is said:

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Heart of Jesus, inflame me.
Blood of Jesus, inebriate me.
Body of Jesus, save me.
Water from the Side of Christ, wash me.
Mother of Jesus, pray for me.
Passion of Jesus, comfort me.
O Good Jesus, hear me.
Hide me in Thy sacred wounds.
Suffer me not to be separated forever from Thee.
Defend me from the malignant spirit of my enemy.
Call me at the hour of my death.
And bid me come to Thee.
That I may praise Thee with Thy saints forever and ever.
Amen.

On each small bead is said: O, Sacred Heart of Jesus, I adore Thee. Enkindle in my heart the fire of the Divine love with which Thou art inflamed.

On each large bead is said: O, Most Sweet Jesus, make my heart according to Thine. Lord Jesus, give me Thy Heart as a token of love, and as a place of refuge, in order that Thou mayest save me, and that I may find therein a sweet repose during my life, and unspeakable consolation at the hour of my death. Amen.

Then is said the following prayer: God of mercy, cast Thine eyes on the Heart of Thy well-beloved Son, the object of your tenderest complacency, and deign to grant in Italy, and was printed in some of the writings of the Italian people. The circular-letter of 1672, written by the Blessed Eudes, in which he ordained the establishment of the feast in the houses of his Congregation, does not permit a doubt of his desire of propagating the worship of the Divine Heart of Jesus, as he had done for that of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The facts speak for themselves. They show him preaching everywhere the Divine Heart of Jesus, composing an Office for the feast, getting the approval of seven Bishops, and accepted in many dioceses, spreading the devotion through thousands of images, distributing books and pamphlets to teach this devotion, instituting confraternities to perpetuate it, and in 1643, at Saint-Savior-le-Vicomte, dedicated an altar. Finally, he consecrated his two Institutes to this Divine Heart. He employed at that time all the means in use today to cause people to love and honor this Divine Heart. If his apostolate is examined as to its efficacy we shall find that his intention of propagating this feast and this devotion is undeniable.

The realization of his prophecy is not less evident, for the Sovereign Pontiff Leo XIII has raised the feast of this Divine Heart of Jesus to the rank of first-class. This decree has given an accidental joy to Heaven, in which happiness we feel satisfied the Blessed institutor revels, he being the pious apostle of this devotion.

The Queen, spoken of in the circular, was Marie Leckinska. A century previous Louis XIV and his court had been present at a sermon preached on the worship of the Sacred

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us the pardon of our sins, which we beg of Thee with a truly contrite heart. We conjure Thee, by the bitter sorrows of that Sacred Heart, and by the infinite merits of His satisfaction, to grant our request. Give us, O my God, a tender love for Jesus, that being wholly penetrated therewith we may merit to be according to Thy Heart. Amen.

This chaplet is extracted from a twelve-inch book kept in the archives of the Monastery of Caen. It is of Eudistic origin, for we find on the first page a heart surmounted by á cross between two branches; one branch represents a lily and the other is of roses, enclosing the busts of Jesus and Mary. Around this image we read these words: "*Live, Jesus and Mary.*" This book is entitled: "Hours Dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus." 1741.

The Annals of Tours tell us that about this time the Sisters occupied themselves with a manual for the Confraternity of the Sacred Hearts. It was, perhaps, at their request that this little book was composed by an Eudist Father.

The Chaplet of the Immaculate Heart of Mary was composed by the Blessed Eudes. On the cross is the word *Credo.* On the three small beads: *Ave Cor Sanctissimum beatissimae Virginis Mariae.* On the large beads: *Gloria Patri, etc.* On the two first decades: *Ave Cor Sanctissimum beatissimae Virginia Mariae.* On the third and fourth decades: *Per cor amantissimum sanctissimae Matris tuae, bone Jesu, fiat cor nostrum secundum Cortuum.* On the fifth and sixth decades: *Per Cor amantissimum sanctissimae Matris tuae, Exaudi nos Jesu.* On the three small beads is repeated three times: *Ave Cor sanctissimae, beatissimae Virginis Mariae.* Then is said the *Gloria Patri.* It is finished by the salutation to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary: *Ave Cor Sanctissimum;* at the end of which is added: *Benedictum sit*, etc. This chaplet is recited by the Community of Caen on the eve and on the feast of the Blessed Eudes. Two candles are lighted before the statue of the Blessed Virgin during the recitation.

Heart. This great King contributed the sum of 2,000 livres for the erection of the Chapel of the Seminary of Caen, dedicated to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

To conform to the desire of his Majesty. the Right Reverend Monsignor Rochechouart made it a feast of obligation throughout his diocese, in 1772. The Office that he composed was very similar to that composed by the Blessed Eudes.

Before concluding all that concerned the superiority of Mother de Montbenard, we will mention the deaths of two little nieces of the Blessed Eudes, Sisters M. of Saint Joseph and M. of the Nativity Eudes. Born in Argentan, they were the granddaughters of Eudes of Houay, that proud sheriff who replied so nobly to an unjust order of the governor of Argentan: "We are three brothers, adorers of Truth: the eldest preaches it, the second writes it, and I shall defend it to my last sigh."

Their father was a doctor like their grandfather and their great-grandfather, for in those times children were not ashamed of the profession followed by their parents. Having lost his wife, he became a priest, and lived a most exemplary life. Instead of favoring the vocation of his two daughters this circumstance occasioned a long delay to their entrance into the convent. They kept house for their grandfather, and this good old man could not be deprived of their care and their devotion. They were already advanced in age before it was possible for them to respond to the call of God, and of course, to remain under such conditions was an evident proof of their generosity, for now that they were older the practices of the religious life were very painful to them.

Sister M. of Saint Joseph, the eldest, had a natural disposition for the contemplative life; Sister M. of the Nativity, on the contrary, felt an attraction for the office of Martha. Her vocation to Our Lady of Charity offers one peculiarity remarkable enough. She felt herself called to an active life, when, as she was making a journey to Caen, she opened her mind to a great missionary of the Congregation of the Eudists (it is thus the Flowers designated this priest, whom, we fancy, was Father Corneille), and he said to her, not by way of advice, but in such a manner as if it were prophetic: "You shall be a Religious, but it will be of the Order of Our Lady of Charity of Caen, and if you are not acquainted there I shall bring you to the monastery myself." These words took away any hesitancy that she might have had, and determined her vocation.

These two sisters brought to the monastery the family traditions that had been conserved for their great uncle, and they were witnesses of the respect of the Sisters for his memory, for both, after a religious life of perfect regularity, died at an advanced age—Sister M. of Saint Joseph in 1757, in her seventy-third year, and Sister M. of the Nativity in 1768 in her eighty-first year, after having been professed fifty-five years. At the time of the latter's entrance her aunt, Mother M. of the Nativity Herson, was probably living, and it was out of respect for her memory that she took her name. The old age of these two Sisters was saddened by nearly a total loss of reason. But this state, when only habit seemed to remain as a guide to their conduct, proved their virtue to have been solid. They appeared to be troubled about nothing except their exercises of piety.

Mother M. of Saint Basil was deposed in 1768. Notwithstanding her advanced age she was charged with the novitiate, and at different times also filled that charge during twenty-four years. Nearly all the Religious of that period had the happiness of being formed by her. Her health grew very feeble towards 1771, and she was not able to leave the infirmary. It was then that, being perfectly free, she followed her attraction for prayer and the interior life. Her death occurred on September 28, 1776, after having lived sixty-three years in the religious life. She was aged eighty-one years.

The Annals do not make known any facts connected with the second superiority of Mother M. of Saint Augustine, who replaced her. Mother M. of Saint Etienne Desfontaines Martin succeeded her from 1774 to 1777. We have found no detail on the life of this Mother.

At the end of the year 1776 a young novice, Sister M. of Saint Paul de Grammont, was miraculously cured through the intercession of the holy institutor. From her entrance into religion this young person conceived a great devotion to this good Father, her happiest moments seeming to be when she was reading the books he composed. She was attacked with a pernicious fever on September 27th. From the moment she felt the first attack of this disease she frequently prayed thus to the Blessed Father: "My Father, if it be God's will that I should be of the number of His spouses, and one of your daughters, ask for me that which you know to be the most agreeable to His Divine Majesty."

However, the disease made great progress. On October 6th the doctor judged that the end was approaching, and advised that the sick novice would receive Extreme Unction during High Mass on that Sunday. Shortly before noon the drops of sweat appeared on her agonized countenance, a forerunner of death. Recalling the filial devotion of the agonizing novice to the Blessed Eudes, one of the Sisters in attendance had a sudden inspiration, and ran to find a morsel of the chausible that he had often worn. While she was gone for it the agony bell sounded, and the Community hastened to the bedside of the dying novice.

When the holy relic was placed on the head of the dying, the Mother Superior promised to have the Office of the Immaculate Conception recited for nine days, and to make two novenas of Masses at the tomb of the Blessed servant of God. At that moment the dying novice gave no other sign of life except a slight convulsive movement of the lips. But soon after she raised her hand to her head, as if to find the precious relic, sat up in bed, and smiled at all the Sisters, took some broth without need of help from any one, and soon after asked for her clothes with which she clothed herself. If the Mother Superior had not, by excessive prudence, forbidden her she would have gone to the choir to thank God for her cure. The next day the doctor was a happy and willing spectator and participant in the joy of the Community, and acknowledged that this cure was beyond the ordinary laws of nature. It would indeed be difficult to see in it the effect of imagination, since the sick novice had been unconscious, and had not known anything that passed around her, such as the promises made if she were cured.

The year following 1777 the Community deeply felt the loss that had come as a thunderbolt to the monastery, as well as to the diocese, in the person of Right Reverend Bishop Rochechouart, Bishop of the diocese of Bayeux. This prelate was always a good friend to the Sisters. In his extreme old age he retired to one of his country houses to prepare at leisure for eternity; however, he continued to write frequently to the Mother Superior, to direct and enlighten her in the government of the monastery. He resigned his Bishopric at the age of seventy-eight years, and died at Montigny, five years later, in 1781. According to the Abbe Laffetay, in his correspondence, it would seem that the desire for the religious life diminished in the diocese after his departure. This is the explanation of his predilection for Our Lady of Charity, because it gave no sign of decadence. He rendered an important service to the monastery by reducing the number of Masses that they were obliged to have said. The Law of the Ministry and the depreciation of paper money made the charge on the foundations very heavy, and the state of suffering became daily more aggravated. The misery of the times and the high prices for commodities made the ministry exact higher salaries. Bishop Rochechouart settled the question on a basis of thirteen sous.

Bishop de Cheylus, who succeeded him, was born at Avignon in 1717. He occupied the See of Treguier from 1762 till 1766, and was well known at the Monastery of Guingamp. He understood the spirit of the works of the daughters of the Blessed Eudes; so when he arrived in Bayeux he consented in the most obliging manner to be their superior, and he always surrounded them with his paternal solicitude.

On January 10, 1780, the Reverend Mother Superior M. of Saint Augustine Labbe died, and on the 20th of the same month the Reverend P. Dumont, Superior-General of the Eudists, presided at the election of Mother M. of Saint Etienne Desfontaines. After having given the funeral sermon for the deceased at the grate he eulogized the one that was to replace her. She governed until 1786.

One of the first things that engaged the attention of this superioress was to procure the benefit of a retreat for the Sisters and the Penitents. The preacher was an elderly Jesuit, Father Dervilliers. Notwithstanding the length of his everlasting sermons and some other eccentricities the Annals enter into a detailed account of them, and say they were at least very serious, and very good. Shortly after three Penitents died very consoling deaths.

Another consolation reserved for Mother Desfontaines was the extraordinary prosperity of the novitiate during those evil times. "The novices came to us from all sides," say the Annals, "and we had the consolation of having five make their profession in the year 1784. The Community had never been so large; we numbered forty-four professed Choir Sisters and ten Lay-Sisters." One circular of 1785 counted in all one hundred and forty persons in the house.

It tells also of the commencement of their trials. The good King Louis XVI was already ruled by the spirit of the Revolution. He gave an order to regulate the admission of persons into houses of penitence, and he prescribed that only those who came of their own free will should be admitted. His stewards were charged with the putting in practice of this decree, and the most annoying inspections were carried on in the Convents of Our Lady of Charity. The author of the circular makes it easy for us to see that the first took place in that of Caen in 1785.

The visit of the sub-delegate was at length finished. He saw all our Penitents, interviewed them separately, and subjected them to a lengthy interrogatory; a recorder wrote down their responses and made them sign them; everything passed off nicely. Those whose testimonies we feared the most, because they had been forced to enter, were the first to say so, but that they wanted now to stay of their own free will. These gentlemen were so surprised that they marveled at their air of goodwill and contentment—so much so that the sub-delegate said to us on leaving: "I only wish that every one could see your Penitents. Assuredly I know whereof I speak, and certainly the picture that is now photographed on my mind is very different from what people think. This visit has not caused any trouble among them; it is true they can only speak in praise of the mistresses who govern them; their classes are well arranged; they are good, although they are bad subjects."

After one hundred years the same calumnies have occasioned the same inspections, and sadder results yet. In all the convents having classes for corrective purposes those poor children have been taken away weeping from their mistresses, notwithstanding their prayers and tears. It was obligatory, all must obey the Masonic sect, tread underfoot the most natural desires, and secularize every utterance. Those who rejected the yoke of the Church were sadly deceived. In the Charity of Caen those visits very soon became less benevolent.

Mother M. of Saint Etienne Desfontaines Martin was regularly deposed in 1786, and Mother M. of Saint Michael was elected to succeed her.

CHAPTER VIII

GOVERNMENT OF MOTHER M. OF SAINT MICHAEL—THE REVOLUTION—SUFFERINGS OF THE SISTERS BEFORE AND AFTER THEIR EXPULSION FROM THEIR MONASTERY

MOTHER M. of Saint Michael Picard was born in the Parish of Our Lady of Caen, of an honorable family of merchants. From her childhood she showed herself well disposed to all that was good; her mind and heart were well prepared for the good seed sown by her pious teachers, and at an early date she manifested the desire of consecrating herself to the Lord. Her love for a solitary and mortified life made her wish to enter the Carmelite Order in Caen, but her delicate health was not able to support those austerities, and after a trial of ten months she was obliged to leave, and return to her family.

Shortly after, forced by her persevering attraction for the religious life, she sought and obtained admission in the Order of Our Lady of Charity. During her novitiate she was a model of all the virtues, and most remarkable for her modesty, simplicity and frankness. She was admitted to holy profession on March 14, 1754.

Her regularity never relaxed in the employments confided to her by obedience. As Mistress of the Penitents she made herself feared and loved by all. Her spirit of order and her wisdom made her the admiration of the Sisters in charge of the econome. But as directress of the novitiate, which is a charge requiring much delicacy of thought and sentiment, the Community appreciated her ability for governing souls, and she was elected superioress on June 1, 1786.

At the beginning of the government of Mother Picard the Community was much tried by sickness, and the deposed Mother was snatched from the affection of the Sisters.

Other trials succeeded without interruption. One of the Penitents, through sheer wickedness and malice, caused a fire, which for a moment threatened to destroy the whole house. Visits of the police and other officers continued to annoy them, but so far their investigations were unsuccessful. Those Penitents who had been forced into the house by their parents did not wish to leave; they feared those visits, and refused the protection that had been offered them with so much eagerness and hypocrisy. Two of them, thinking they were going to have a good time, yielded to the solicitations of their so-called friends and left, but some days later they came back and humbly begged to be taken in again.

A circular of 1787 relates the joyous enthusiasm of the people when Louis XVI passed through Caen on his way to Cherbourg. After reading the lamentable events of his captivity and death, and the heart-breaking accounts of those fearful times, any other little detail seems to make a break and give a little cheer to the reader. The Sisters made use of those little items of interest respecting their King and country, in order to excite themselves to a new fervor in their love for the King of Kings.

The statistics of that circular state the diminution of the personnel of the house. There were only one hundred and twenty-six persons at that time in the monastery. Possibly the difference came from the boarding class, which at that date only counted twenty children. Doubtless, the parents and relatives were afraid to send their children away from home. The general ruin of everything was another cause.

The events of the Revolution are too well known to need any lengthy discussion here, save in what relates to its action on the Sisters. As far as we know, none of them shed her blood for the faith, but not one denied it, and not one betrayed her country. This reflection may be extended to all the houses then existing, and thereby we conclude that the glory of Our Lady of Charity was not tarnished, but became more brilliant. It then was composed of about three hundred members. It certainly was and is a beautiful spectacle to see all those Sisters, without exception, faithful to the Church, and going through those years of blood and death without one failing in her duty. Those who have succeeded them ought to meditate on these examples, especially when they feel overburdened, or when they feel that similar trials are prepared for them. The revolutionary period opened itself up for the Monastery of Caen through an order that a procurator from among the clergy should be named who, in the name of the Community, would contribute to the election of a Deputy for the States-General of 1789. Reverend M. Godefroy, the almoner, was the object of this choice. The convocation, so unfortunate for France, was announced for that independence and liberty from which we are as far today as they were then. All interests were there represented. It is, perhaps, the best proof of the extent of the evil, for if their ideas had been sound, and the ambitions of the wicked less marked and less excitable, the elections would have returned deputies more fit for commanding. But a multitude of crimes called for a just, if terrible chastisement.

On October 29, 1789, after other decrees equally iniquitous and outrageous to the liberty of the Church, they gave another to abolish religious Orders of both sexes. The Procurator-General had it read in the Community Chapter on December 7, 1789, but his letter was dated November 23d. The Sisters had to sign an act of submission, but they made it with some restriction:

> The reading of the *Declaration of the King* . . . was performed in a loud and intelligible voice by one of us . . . Before conforming ourselves thereto we feel well persuaded that his Majesty and our respected National Assembly will raise said prohibition, when they are informed of the utility of our religious house for the education of young girls of good family who are received here, and for the conversion of those girls and women whose lives were anything but edifying in the world, whom we call Penitents; indeed, we are assured of the goodwill of those in high station.

The reading of the declaration was as a thunderbolt in the midst of the Sisters; they had not looked forward to anything so terrible. Some novices left shortly after; the others hoped against hope until the moment of dispersion. Another decree followed soon after, ordering the confiscation of the goods of the Communities. On January 22, 1790, the Sisters had to make an inventory of all they possessed. On account of a number of skilful attempts the Mother Superior succeeded momentarily in saving the Community. A privilege was granted to charitable establishments. It was in view of this title that the Sisters obtained the following reprieve, on January 4, 1792:

> Requests and subjoined documents having been noted, and by the advice of the district of Caen, laid before our honored Assembly, we have come to the conclusion that the House of Refuge is, by its Institute, a hospice of instruction and of

> charity; hearing the report of the Procurator-General, We, Administrators of the Directory of Calvados, have decided that the goods belonging to said House of Refuge shall be classified as national goods, and that the said Community remain and regulate said goods, as it has done heretofore.

The conduct of the Penitents was a great consolation to the Sisters during those sad years. Their former indocility had ceased, and the trials of the times reawoke their slumbering faith. We shall allow the Annals a word on this matter:

> During one of their frequent visits the Government Agents played a trick on them to make them acknowledge that they were enclosed by force. Unexpectedly announced, they went immediately to the classes, and commenced to boast about the grand and wonderful work of the *Immortal* Assembly, and told our poor children (they numbered about forty) that they had come to break their chains, and restore them to liberty; take them away from that private system of despotism they had been enduring so long; that they must come like all the French subjects, and render homage to those citizens whose enlightenment had made known the rights of man, which they had solemnly proclaimed; that in fine, they should rejoice that the yoke of the oppressor was at length broken. But it is easy to imagine the confusion of those pretended doctors when they saw these imaginary captives kissing and blessing their "chains," and telling them their only wish was to remain where they were.

When the Constitutional oath was demanded of the clergy without any distinction, Reverend M. Godefroy nobly refused to take it. However, he was permitted to say Mass in the convent until their expulsion; this favor was granted at the earnest prayer of the Sisters, but the chapel doors were closed.

In the beginning of the year 1792 the revolutionaries attempted to secure from the Religious all that was requisite for the taking of the schismatic oath by each one. By their untruthful discourses and fallacious reasonings they tried to persuade the Sisters that all they had to do was simply to take an oath of fealty to the laws of the State. It was a vain attempt. Being separately interrogated, each one refused energetically. Unhappily, their replies have not been preserved; however, they gave a very edifying example of heroism. Those miscreants seemed to fear them; possibly fear, lest others would do likewise, made them refuse to leave a copy with the Sisters.

A note of gaiety was not completely lost in this transaction, however lamentable the occasion. Those district agents tried to make even the servants of the monastery take the oath. One of them, seemingly nearly idiotic, hid beneath her appearance of a simpleton a great faith and heroic pertinacity when called upon to do anything contrary to her conscience. When her turn came the Nationalists made her the most magnificent promises, to all of which she coolly replied: "The Sister Econome gives me all that I want; so thank you kindly; I need nothing from any of your honors." "That does not matter; you must take the oath," replied one of the citizens. "The Catechism tells us that it is a sin to swear," responded the girl, "and I will not commit a sin to please you nor the whole Kingdom of France." "No; understand well, that to take this oath is no sin; it is only obeying the law which has so decreed. Do not be like the aristocrats, who refuse to submit; be wise." "Do you want me to swear then!" she asked, looking as if she would bore a hole through him. "Yes, yes, swear; the nation will take care of you if you do." "Listen then, gentlemen," she replied without the slightest hesitancy. "I will swear, since you want me to; now pay attention: May the devil fly away with you!. . . . I do hope that is the best kind of an oath you heard, or are likely to hear today." It was certainly the best that could have been made under the circumstances. It left the Nationalists stupified, although it occasioned many bursts of laughter. The secretary took good care to make a record of the oath of the good Margaret.

The time for the deposition of Mother M. of Saint Michael being come, the Sisters proceeded in the matter with an astonishing calmness, like any ordinary occasion, and then made a new election. The Nationalists knew about the affair, and manifested their desire to preside at the election. After consulting the representatives of Bishop de Cheylus, then in exile, the Community decided to place at their head their former superioress, Mother Picard, as the times obliged them to take great care of their present actions.

All these trials were only the commencement of misfortunes that were going to fall upon the convent. From the time they refused to take the oath the Sisters expected an order for their immediate expulsion. A new decree of the National Assembly hastened it. They had to evacuate the monastery by October 2d. When this decree was promulgated the officers or guards stationed themselves in the sacristy of the

Community, so as to hinder the Sisters from taking anything away, and from that moment all worship ceased.

"On August 19th," the Annals tell us, "feast of our worthy institutor, a day when all hearts were naturally filled with joy and sweet consolation, it was turned into a day of deep grief, heart-breaking anguish, and bitter tears. Like the Israelites, quitting Jerusalem, we had to disperse; we had to leave our dear Community, to go and dwell in Babylon. It would be impossible to depict in any language the heart-breaking scenes that took place on that sorrowful day. The remembrance alone makes one shiver. The last moments that preceded our departure were employed in venerating the places so dear to our hearts, places that for many among us would never again be revisited. We prostrated ourselves on the marble flags on which we had sworn to live and die in this blessed monastery. Then came the last farewells. The sobs, the tears, the anguish of that moment was unspeakably sad. Then came the reciprocal promises of fidelity; the marks of tenderness shown at that general farewell scene would have convinced worldlings, if they had been privileged witnesses, that death alone can break the bonds formed between us by the vows of holy religion."

Several Sisters went home to their families, or were received among friends; others went to the Hotel-Dieu, which had been spared for the time being. But that asylum was very quickly forbidden for Religious. Mother M. of Saint Michael remained alone with the infirm and aged. Naturally timid and reserved, in those days and under those circumstances she showed a wonderful courage and strength of soul which bordered on the superhuman; she said to the Commissaries of the district:

> My family is wealthy, and they are asking me to go home to them, but the Lord God has charged me with the burden of the superiority, and I must look upon myself as the protectress of my Sisters. Some of them are without fortune, without relations, old and infirm, and if I abandon them what will become of them? You have forbidden more than two of us to remain together; I wonder, gentlemen. if in your kindness you will listen to a request that I have a mind to make of you; it is a permission, if you will. which in all conscience I think you ought to grant: it is to let me gather together my infirm Sisters, and to serve them as a mother, and thus partake with them the bread of labor and suffering. But my age,

my infirmities will not permit me to take care of them alone, so please allow me to keep with me a young Religious to help me.

God permitted that those representations would make some impression on those hardened personages, and they consented to her request. They felt very much embarrassed when confronted with those old and infirm Sisters, for well they knew they had contributed to this unhappy condition in which they were in their declining years. Mother Picard, acinstalled the dear infirm in the third story of a house in the Rue Puits-es-bottes. They fulfilled their obligations to the very best of their ability in their new situation. This was always considered the core of the Community.

The death of King Louis XVI, on January 21, 1793, was the signal of a recrudescence in the persecution. France was literally covered with scaffolds, and it was then that the agents of Robespierre invented those atrocious tortures which affright the imagination. The Sisters escaped only by a mircompanied by the young Sister M. of Saint Dosithe Bourdon acle. Domiciliary visits were frequent, and always unexpected. The discovery of the smallest object of devotion dragged them to captivity and death. It was only with extreme difficulty, and from time to time, that the Sisters procured religious aid. Reverend M. de Saint-Aignan, Vicar-General of Seez, was arrested a few days after having heard their confessions, and was guillotined with his courageous hostess, Miss Desacres.

The year of 1794 was still more painful than the preceding one. Famine stalked unchecked through the land. Every ten days it was necessary to go to the market place with special tickets to receive a little portion of grain or meal, which it was almost impossible to make into bread. Without some truly providential aid the poor Sisters would have died of want. Their rent was over due, and the landlord threatened them with eviction if they would not pay very soon. of want. Their rent was over due, and the landlord threatened day.

About the middle of the year the reign of terror seemed to increase in ferocity. The Sisters were warned that they would be denounced at the club, and would be imprisoned later on. Mother M. of Saint Michael then accepted an offer of an inhabitant of Lebisey, a little neighboring village, of lodging in one of his garrets. They would be secure there, as he had the reputation of being a good *patriot*.

But this good man was too poor to feed them; and, indeed, never did the dearth of food appear greater, and never did they have so much to suffer in that line. To give enough bread to the sick Sister M. of Saint Dosithe had to live for six weeks on fruit and vegetables alone. By her activity, devotedness, courage and coolness she became a veritable providence for that little family.

The fall of Robespierre broke up the persecution, and the Sisters went back to Caen, where they easily found help of every description. They took lodgings in a large house in the parish of Saint Gilles, where some of the other Sisters came; soon all those that wished to gather together did so, and all were happy, and hoped to continue so by the practice of the religious life where they were for the present.

In the month of February, 1795, the Convention decreed that all Religious were free, with one condition attached—not to exercise any exterior act of worship. Several priests, who had gone abroad, returned to France. But this relative calm was of short duration. The ready blasphemers, furious at seeing their adherents reconciled to the Church, raised up a new persecution. Search and domiciliarly visits were renewed. One day an armed force came at daybreak, when all the Sisters were yet in bed; the noise of their arms awoke them; they had only time to escape into a hiding-place in the house of M. Anctil, at that time parish priest of Saint Gilles, where they were lodging. This good priest had also the good luck to escape their clutches.

The Religious ran great danger in their headlong flight. In a nearby chamber there were two cupboards, one of them was filled with Church ornaments. Sister M. of Saint Dosithe, always cool-headed and mistress of herself, opened that which contained the coifs, guimps and similar articles of wear. They were a subject of merriment to these big men, and to amuse themselves they pelted them up in the air, then threw them pell-mell in the middle of the room. Some papers, containing resolutions written during retreats, excited their curiosity; they rummaged through them, then destroyed them. Then they asked that the other cupboard would be opened. It was here Sister M. of Saint Dosithe got ahead of them. "Citizens," she said, "when you have put back what you have taken out of this cupboard, and settled in their place what you have ransacked, I will open the other for you, not before; I know your laws, and I know that you should leave things as you found them." And she held to her word. After a heated discussion they thought it better to forego a visit to the other cupboard than to undertake a job so new to men of their ilk.

A short time after Mother M. of Saint Michael and Sister M. of the Holy Cross were denounced and arrested. The Mother Superior in the midst of this new trial kept her peace Seeing only God in all these events she abandoned herself into His hands. Her companion was less mistress of her emotions, but the privation of the Sacraments tormented her more than the fear of a bloody death. She represented her needs incessantly to her poor superior, who was not able to afford her any comfort in that particular point.

During those unfortunate days Sister M. of Saint Dosithe was more than ever the support and only resource of her companions. After having exhausted all the means at her command to give liberty to the dear prisoners she resolved to make a final effort. She mounted all the good Mothers on a sorry old cart, and with their consent took them to the Municipality. After getting them free of the novel conveyance—and she had a mighty hard time in pulling them down—she said to the surprised magistrates: "Citizens, here are our infirm Sisters that I have brought you; I am not able to take care of them any longer; I have nothing with which to feed them; and the two Sisters that helped me to take care of them you threw into prison; now I cannot continue to support them, since you sent me soldiers to take care of, too; something that should never have been done." "Very well," replied the Commissaries; "we will put them in prison with the others." "You can," she answered; "there at least you will have to feed them. As for me, I do not want to see them die of hunger." One of the good old Mothers, hearing them mention the prison, was taken with a violent attack of nervousness, made all sorts of facial contortions, became hysterical, and cried with all her strength. The municipal officers were very much embarrassed by this display, and they commenced to hesitate about sending those Sisters to prison, on account of their great age. However, they promised to see about their claims, and finished by telling Sister M. of Saint Dosithe: "Take back your sick folks, and we'll take away the soldiers." The bright little

Sister was quite satisfied with her stratagem, and again getting her dear charges upon the old wagon hied her back to her lodging, where she welcomed them home very charmingly, and bade farewell to her retiring guests—the soldiers. A few days later the Mother Superior and her companion were liberated, after spending three months in prison.

This was the last great trial of those terrible days. In 1796, under the government of the Directory, the Community commenced to reorganize.

From 1792 to 1796 seven Sisters had died.

SECOND MONASTERY—RENNES

CHAPTER I

ORIGIN OF THE HOUSE OF THE PENITENTS AT RENNES—LIFE OF MOTHER MARY OF THE TRINITY HEURTANT, BEFORE SHE TOOK UP ITS DIRECTION

ABOUT the middle of the seventeenth century a movement for reform rang through the greater part, if not the whole of France. Its echo was persistently felt in Brittany, where God raised up many holy missionaries, such as Fathers Huby and Maunoir, Father de Kerlivio and many others. At Rennes, the capital, ladies of high social standing gave the most beautiful examples of piety and virtue. Distinguished among them all we find Madame d' Argouge, wife of the first president of the parliament of the province. Her name is met with in all the good works of that period. She was the benefactress particularly of the houses of Rennes, Vannes and Paris. She had given her assistance during the first attempts at founding the work for the Penitents at Rennes, and contributed generously by her alms.

Those attempts were made in the year 1659. Miss Duplessis-Rouleau felt herself strongly inspired to work for the conversion of persons of her own sex, who had turned aside from the way of virtue. She was at that time forty years old, was of an excellent family, but one that was not wealthy. Her whole life had been a round of good works; the poor sick were the portion of God's chosen on whom she elected to exercise her charity; hence, she merited to be called to wash and cleanse the wounded souls of penitent women. Through respect for ecclesiastical authority she submitted her project to Bishop de la Vieuville, a prelate as pious as he was zealous. Not content with approving her venture he charged his Vicar-General to direct and aid her to the best of his ability. The little house that Miss Duplessis opened, and to which she gave her fortune, counted about fifteen Penitents, and they were very sincere in their conversion, so much so that the Vicar-General asked the Bishop of Rennes to donate or buy some property on which to build a house capable of containing a large number. The property chosen by the Bishop de la Vieuville was situated the whole length of the ramparts, in the parish of Saint Etienne, not far from the present Cathedral. Its narrow surroundings had been the cause of much annoyance to the Sisters up to the time of the Revolution. This house was known later under the name of the Little Convent of the Trinity.

By the solicitation of Madame d'Argouge the States of Brittany gave 9,000 livres, which helped to erect the first buildings. Mlle. Duplessis was overwhelmed with joy; indeed, she persevered with so much ardor in the direction of her dear girls that her strength gave way. Her death was as holy as her life. Penetrated with sentiments of penance she inspired it in others. She wished to die on the floor with a rope around her neck, and thus await Him Who never rejects a contrite and humble heart.

After her death the Penitents, left to their own devices, did not persevere, and the work seemed to be destroyed, when M. Duplessis-Ravenal, counsellor of the inferior court of Judicature, engaged Mlle. Menard to take it up.

The life of this pious young lady is known to us through Mother M. of the Trinity Heurtant, who had it printed in 1689 after her death, which took place in Vannes.

Mlle. Menard was born in Rennes of honest parents. They had her educated in the Convent of the Visitandines of Pontivy, and from her tenderest years she felt an attraction for the practice of all the virtues. The incomparable beauty of purity captivated her heart, and when she was barely nine years old she made a vow of perpetual chastity. This sacrifice was so agreeable to God that He did not permit the demon to assault her, even with the most ordinary temptations. In her intimate confidences with Mother Heurtant Mlle. Menard acknowledged that she never had the least thought against this beautiful virtue. Mortification of the senses, very rare in so young a child, was her safeguard.

When she was fifteen years old she entered the novitiate of the Hospital Ladies, newly established in Rennes. Her regularity and constant fervor permitted her to be prepared for her holy profession. But God destined her to work for the salvation of souls. When the question of her dowry arose her father quarreled with the Community about it. His wrath went so far that he demanded the Sisters to give up his daughter. She had to return to her home; in the midst of the world Mlle. Menard continued the practices of the religious life. It was on account of this life of devotedness that she was singled out by M. Duplessis as directress of the Penitents.

She lived in their house for some months, when her attraction for the religious life reawoke stronger than ever. The counsels of a good Religious alone hindered her from following it immediately. Enlightened by a divine light he said to her: "My dear Sister, do not leave the place where you are now, and you shall see that your design will be accomplished. This house shall one day be a monastery. The work of the Lord will never be destroyed; He wills that Religious serve Him here. They will name some one to be superior, and He has destined you to aid her, and for this purpose He shall communicate to you singular graces. Believe what I have told you; wait, and you shall see God glorified in this work." Very much consoled Mlle. Menard abandoned herself entirely to Divine Providence, and soon saw the prediction of this good Religious verified.

The Penitents constantly increased, and the alms bestowed more abundant than ever: Madame d'Argouge gave 16,000 livres, Madame de Brie, wife of the President of the Court of Parliament added 15,000 livres more; several persons imitated their example; indeed, so much money poured in that M. Duplessis, the charitable administrator of this house, believed the time had come to get some Religious to govern and render permanent this establishment. He knew and revered the Institute of Our Lady of Charity. The Annals do not tell us how he came by his knowledge. The great reputation of the Blessed Eudes is doubtless a natural explanation, and the reason of this belief is that a short time after Bishop de la Vieuville entered into negotiations with him in regard to the celebrated mission of 1670. The prelate fully approved of the design that M. Duplessis had of calling on the Religious of Our Lady of Charity, and told him to go to Caen, in order to assure himself of the privilege of securing their services.

It was in the year 1666. Reverend Mother Patin knew that the Order had been approved in Rome on January 2d.

(This Mother was superioress in the Monastery of Caen). But perhaps she had not as yet the Bulls of Alexander VII, for Bishop de Nesmond brought them only after Easter of that year. Probably the sixteen first professed had not yet solemnly renewed their vows. This ceremony did not take place until the feast of the Ascension, June 3d. On account of these circumstances, or on account of the paucity of numbers of professed Religious, Mother Patin did not think she could accept the offer of M. Duplessis, and refused to give him any of the Sisters. But she told him about a former novice of the monastery who would be capable of seconding his plans, and preparing for a foundation later on.

The person who had inspired so much confidnce in Mother Patin later on became Mother M. of the Trinity (Heurtant). It is, then, worth while to make her known to the reader, for she was a conspicuous figure in the beginning of the Order. If she had been born twenty years sooner, and the Blessed Eudes had had the happiness of meeting her, she would easily have taken the place of an illustrious cooperatrix in his works, such as many other saints were destined to do on monastic foundations.

She was born at Esteham, near Caen on November 11, 1634. Before her birth her mother frequently wondered about her offspring; she already felt that extraordinary facts, met with sometimes in the history of saints, were in some way connected with her child, and inwardly questioned herself to what degree of virtue it would attain. Her infancy was still more extraordinary than her birth. This predestined child was only three months old when visitors, received by her parents, threw their cloaks inadvertantly over her cradle, and suffocated her. After their departure a domestic found the baby already cold. Madame Heurtant came in unexpectedly, and in her sorrow cried so loud and long that the neighbors came running to her from all directions. All at once, inspired by a lively confidence, the poor frantic mother threw herself on her knees, and in presence of all cried out: "O Our Lady of Deliverance, give me back my child, and I will consecrate her to you forever." This prayer was hardly finished when the child showed signs of life, and the astonishment of all the spectators was so great that they all cried out with one voice that it was a miracle.

"Very often in the course of time," adds the Annalist, "Mother Heurtant was asked what she saw at that time. There was left in her mind, it seems, a vague remembrance of being in Paradise; and she believed this faint remembrance was, no doubt, due to the weakness of the organs at that tender age. But a most important gift, gathered from that first favor, was that of faith. This virtue was so injected into her soul that no shadow ever touched it."

This child was also miraculously saved from imminent death when she was seven years old. Her eldest sister and herself were playing on the brink of a lake, and with the light-hearted unconsciousness of childhood were advancing nearer to the water by a backward movement. Her sister was already drowning when a young man drew them out of danger, brought them to the door of their house, and said to those he met in the courtyard: "Here are two children who would have been drowned if God had not sent them help," and he presently disappeared. Mother M. of the Trinity always believed it was her Angel Guardian.

She was at that early age very anxious to keep in mind all the good advice she received, and was especially attentive at prayer. One time she heard that a priest preferred mental to vocal prayer; at once she gave up her ordinary prayers—even her Rosary, to apply herself to meditation. The Holy Virgin, wishing to draw her away from this illusion, appeared to her under the figure of a lady of great beauty, and addressed to her these reproaches: "What! You have neglected to honor me—you, to whom I have given back your existence! Ungrateful child, instead of doing so you ought to be more attached to my service. You know that my Son has chosen you for His spouse, and you are so unfaithful!" This vision lasted more than an hour, during which Our Lady taught her, herself, the manner of reciting the Rosary. After this apparition Mlle. Heurtant desired to live only for God, and she made a vow to say the Rosary every day, and she fulfilled this vow most exactingly until her death.

She made her First Communion in the holiest dispositions. She seemed always in the presence of God. Our Lord, surrounded by a luminous aureole, appeared to her, showed her His Heart, and pointed out to her all her defects. The sight of her imperfections would have been capable of casting her into a feeling of discouragement, if the Good Master had not taken care to promise her proportionate help to overcome her weakness. It was thus that she was delivered from vanity and self-complacency, which were natural to her.

About that time, in the midst of a profound sleep, her future vocation was made known to her; the condition of Lay-Sisters which, during several years, was hers, was not less clearly shown her. She saw two Religious, one was clothed in black and the other in white. The first said to her: "Do you wish to follow me?" then showing her the book the other one held she added: "You ought to apply yourself to sing in choir, and do not spare yourself when there is question of heavy work, even to make bread, and anything else that obedience demands of you." Later on her arrival in the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity, she immediately recognized the countenance of Mother Patin, and that of Sister M. of the Assumption de Taillefer, first professed of the Institute; she saw their black and white habit, as well as the book of the Constitutions, opened where it treated of obedience and uprightness of intention—in a word, all the details of the apparition were exactly realized.

From that time, forced by a continual and ardent desire of being a Religious, Mlle. Heurtant commenced to exercise herself in mortification and in meditation. Three times a week she took the discipline, slept on a hard bed, and made with great care her daily examen. To supply a failure of proper direction she accused herself, with the simplicity of a child, to the Mother of God, and believed she heard an interior voice that responded: "You must do such a penance to expiate that fault." Her obedience to this inspiration was always prompt and exact.

Her parents, who had taken her away from the Academy of the Ursulines of Caen, where she was a boarder, saw those tendencies with much displeasure, and tried to restrict her exercises of piety by every means in their power. Their pious daughter made use of a stratagem to hide her frequent Communions. Her good Angel was often her accomplice. When she was slow in rising He woke her up soon enough to go secretly to the church. She was then nineteen years of age, and had a fine appearance, joined to an excellent education; hence, she was several times solicited by her parents to contract a union according to her rank. Captivated by the Celestial Bridegroom Mlle. Heurtant would not consent, and asked as a favor to be allowed to enter the religious life.

After three years of trials, which were for her real martyrdom, a second vision gave her hopes of soon being heard and answered according to her desire. During sleep she thought she saw the Blessed Virgin enter her chamber with her mother, and heard Holy Mary say to her: "Give me your daughter; I want her to serve me." Her mother replied: "Madame, she is not worthy enough to serve you." The Blessed Virgin, taking her by the hand, continued: "Let her come; I will clothe her in my livery," and on taking her away she said to the object of her solicitude: "I want you to serve me in my house; and there is reserved for you the Body and Blood of my Son in the tabernacle. You will find hearts that are half rotten, souls stained with crime and their bodies gangrenous; but fear not; and I will give you a mark that what I say is true. Your sister, who has been married over two years, and who has asked me to give her a child, shall have one in a short time." This promise was realized, and it determined Mme. Heurtant not to further oppose her daughter's vocation.

The words of the Blessed Virgin indicated a very particular affection for the Order of Our Lady of Charity, which she called her house. Comparing them with those made several times to Sister Marie Desvallees we find they are similar, for they confirm the assurance that they were and would be the daughters of this admirable Mother, and her children by predilection.

Mlle. Heurtant was not acquainted at the monastery, and according to her desire, her parents requested her admission to the Abbey of the Holy Trinity of Caen, where one of her relations had been for some years. Her entrance was decided upon, when this Religious made some remark that certainly was not according to her preconceived notions of the religious life, and it resulted in Mlle. Heurtant's opposition to that house. To encourage her, this relative thought it her duty to tell her that it was a great honor to be received into their Community, because it was composed of persons of rank, and that some day she might hope to become abbess. The postulant was scandalized, and consequently withdrew.

After many fervent prayers, asking of our Lord to make known to her the place where He wished her to serve Him, it happened that she went at Easter, 1658, to the Chapel of Our Lady of Charity. She received a positive assurance that this was the place where God wanted her, and that He wished her to speak with Mother Patin. She spoke to her freely, and soon found out that this conversation was conformable to her visions, and presently asked to be admitted. On the evening previous to the day arranged for her admission Mlle. Heurtant went into the Church of Saint Peter at Caen to thank the Divine Goodness for this favor, and at that moment she heard a voice clear and distinct—it seemed to issue from the tabernacle—saying these words to her: "Yes, it is a great grace, but you must change yourself, annihilate yourself completely, for God is here." These words engraved themselves upon her soul, and she determined for the rest of her life to be guided by the lights and experience of her lawful superiors. This happened later on during the trials of her long novitiate in Caen, trials which effectually annihilated her own will.

The fervor of the young novice responded to the greatness of the graces received. She performed the most painful exercises of the religious life, with a joy that she could hardly restrain, and our Lord recompensed her by giving her new favors. At that time there was among the Penitents a person attacked with an infectious and very humiliating disease. Her companions dared not approach her; Mother Patin was very much embarrassed in regard to the washing of the linen belonging to this sick girl, but did not wish others would know about it. The generous novice offered herself for this repugnant job. Scarcely had she commenced, in an out-house, to do this appalling task, than she was aware of a sweet perfume floating around her; even the wood necessary to heat the water was impregnated with the delicious odor. Our Lord, His holy Mother, Saint John the Baptist and Saint Paul came at the same time to rejoice her by their presence, and Jesus Christ deigned to address her this consoling promise: "Be faithful, and I shall never abandon you."

Mlle. Heurtant was twenty-two years old when she was clothed with the holy habit. On that day the whole convent was pervaded with a fragrant and delicious odor, the origin of which it was impossible to find. But the novice received a much greater favor, as she herself has made known thus: "When I received the name of the Trinity it seemed to me that the three Divine Persons took new possession of my mind and heart: God the Father assured me of His succor in all that obedience would prescribe me, God the Son promised me His wisdom in all my proceedings, and God the Holy Ghost promised me a participation in His divine purity, if I would be faithful to destroy within myself all that was still too human in me."

Employed shortly after in the instruction of the Penitents, the gift of penetrating hearts commenced to be manifested in her. One of these poor girls made a pretended general confession; her young mistress asked her if she had confessed everything—if she was satisfied, and on receiving an affirmative answer she said to her: "You have not told me the truth, for you have concealed such a sin," and she stated to the astonished girl all the circumstances. Surprised and confused the Penitent threw herself at her feet, and acknowledged her fault, promising to repair it at once, which she did. There was yet another person whose gross mind was the terror of her companions. Sister M. of the Trinity spoke to her with so much unction that this poor Penitent was soon converted, and died a holy death.

These extraordinary graces multiplied to such a degree that Mother Patin was much disquieted; then the novice opened her mind to her with the simplicity of a child. At the request of this prudent superior Father Mangot, S. J., examined her carefully, and acknowledged that this conduct was evidently the work of God. The Lord Himself was thus preparing this Sister for hard and very long trials that awaited her. Her novitiate was finished, and she was prepared for her profession, when her parents found it impossible to keep their promise regarding her dowry. The extreme poverty of the house hindered them from letting it pass; they then proposed that she be received to the rank of the Lay-Sisters, hoping, too, that the constant occupation this would afford her would put an end to her ecstacies and visions.

The virtue of Sister M. of the Trinity was superior to this new trial. With the most complete indifference she recommenced her novitiate. But human prudence is incapable of hindering the designs of God on a soul.

Although her plans were thwarted Sister M. of the Trinity continued to be called in an irresistible manner to walk in the sublime ways of perfection. She often felt as if an invisible hand was shoving her up the chimney, when she was working in the kitchen. For the space of one year her interior pains were very poignant, and made her think that perhaps she was possessed by a devil, and that she had become the object of his tricks. In this state of crucifixion she made a vow never to follow her own will in doing anything that could bring evil on her, and carried this vow, written by herself and signed with her own blood, to her superior, in order to get her approbation so as to make it more valuable in the sight of God. At length it pleased God to deliver her from this heavy cross. Mother Patin permitted her to recite in choir, before the miraculous image of the Blessed Virgin, which is above the superior's stall, a chaplet composed of this request of the Pater Noster: "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." All at once she was seized with an extraordinary fear, and it seemed to her that she was thrown into the abyss of hell, and she heard at the same time these words: "All creatures merit to be the victims of God's vengeance." Then our Lord appeared to her in great power and majesty, as if He had come to condemn her. But on the contrary He approached her with an excessive goodness, and said to her: "Peace, be still." At the same moment all her sorrows ceased, and God, willing to indemnify her for the past, overwhelmed her with so many favors that she remained entire hours deprived of the use of her senses. Having returned to her normal condition, full of confusion she said to her Sisters: "You would have done the right thing if you had given me the discipline to recall me to myself."

The work that had been confided to her remained undone, of course, during her ecstacies. The end of her novitiate being come the Community did not think it possible for her to be admitted to profession. Mother Patin heard this decision with sorrow, and in a spirit that showed her a true prophetess she cried out: "No, Sister M. of the Trinity is not destined for this house. God has great designs on her, and He wills that they be accomplished. You refuse her, but she shall not die until she has been professed in the Institute."

Mlle. Herutant received this new cross with her accustomed resignation. After five years of sojourn in the house, from 1658 to 1663, she left to beg admission among the Capuchin Nuns; those Religious would not receive her, because she had already worn the Religious habit. She then went to her parents at Estreham, where she lived a holy life for three years, waiting in peace for the manifestation of the designs of God upon her. Finally, she was destined to be the foundation stone of the Monastery of Rennes.

The House of Caen did not think itself capable of taking up that mission, as no one save one Lay-Sister had been admitted to profession for some time. It was, then, to her home that M. Duplessis went to consult Mlle. Heurtant regarding his proposed foundation; this he did by the advice of Mother Patin. She was in bed suffering from a dropsy. However, after having listened to M. Duplessis, and read the letter written by her whom she always thought of as her superior, she said to God: "Lord, if it is Thy will that I go, make it known to me, by restoring my health, so that I can accomplish it." This humble and confiding prayer was heard, and the next day Mlle. Heurtant went to Caen to receive advice and instruction from Mother Patin. Shortly after she went with her charitable guide to Rennes. During the journey she was miraculously saved from death. While riding she fell from the saddle, and that fall, if it were not fore-ordained that she should not die at that particular time, would have ended disastrously. But her great labors and works of every kind were only commencing.

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CHAPTER II

MADEMOISELLE HEURTANT TAKES UP THE GOVERNMENT OF THE HOUSE—HER SUCCESS—UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORTS OF THE BLESSED EUDES TO OBTAIN SISTERS FROM THE MONASTERY OF CAEN—THE SENDING OF SISTERS M. OF SAINT JULIEN LEBLOND AND MARY ANGELIQUE DE BALDE—ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MONASTERY

ON her arrival in Rennes Mlle. Heurtant was received as one sent from God. Mlle. Menard, with a humility that was very remarkable, gave up the government of the house and effaced herself utterly before her successor, seconding her in all the material affairs with rare ability. Mlle. Heurtant, always desirous of the religious life, commenced to keep the enclosure, and took a habit similar to that of the Visitation. The house had at that time about forty or fifty Penitents, the greater number being kept there by force. The administrators insisted that they be treated harshly; several were kept in perpetual seclusion; others were chained near their beds; their food was composed mainly of black bread. The new directress was touched to the heart by such a sight; her first step was to obtain from the administrators permission to be more humane in dealing with those poor creatures, and to adopt the same measures as she had seen in the House of Caen. Their food was of a better quality and more generous in quantity, corporal punishment gave place to kind and considerate treatment, and their direction was sweet and gentle. Soon all hearts were gained, and there was such a rapid transformation in the house that every one was astonished.

With those poor creatures, whose principal defect is inconstancy, firmness was eminently necessary; the wise mistress knew how to employ it to the purpose. One Penitent, who had left the house and deserved to be sent back by her bad conduct, showed how well this able directress could deal with this kind of hardened delinquent. In order to frighten her mistress she tried—not with a very settled intention of killing herself—to hang herself, and let on that she was dead. Mlle. Heurtant presently discovered the ruse, and brought her back to life by a good correction. The magistrate had sent a woman to the house who had committed some crime; she was a person of high standing, and he thought it well to imprison her in a tower of this house of Penitents. This unfortunate woman, by some means or other, made known to her accomplices where she was enclosed, and instructed them how to help her out of her difficulty. Her plan was succeeding finely, when Mlle. Heurtant was strongly inspired to go and visit her during the night. Having climbed up to the tower, what was her consternation to find there several men who had already taken away part of the covering. She upbraided them for their unworthy conduct—conduct, she told them, utterly at variance with their position as gentlemen. Her words and bearing impressed them to such degree that they withdrew wholly confused, gave up their midnight escapade, and their quest for a booty that would cost them dearly had it become known to the authorities.

Perfect order soon reigned throughout the establishment. The wise directress applied herself particularly to cultivate among the inmates a love for piety, and the celebration of the divine Office. So many proofs of her sanctity and prudence attracted to her work the sympathies of the public, especially of the most distinguished people of the city. Alms poured in abundantly, and the pious superioress was in a condition to build a chapel, which she consecrated to the Most Holy Trinity: that mystery to which she had an all-particular attraction, and which she honored with deepest reverence. She even wanted to take that name, and this time it was given her to keep forever. Little by little she gave to her house the shape and form of a Community. Several young persons entered, enticed by her wonderful virtue, and ranking themselves under her guidance worked with her for the salvation of souls. She gave them a black habit, like the one she had herself adopted.

Having been sent away from the Monastery of Caen because she lacked a dowry, Mother M. of the Trinity never required any from those who came to her, provided they showed goodwill. Although the number of Penitents was large, the poverty was often extreme; still, her confidence in God was unlimited. One day the Sister Econome's purse was very slim; opening it she found only thirty sous. Some poor person came and begged alms for some urgent necessity; without hesitation the good Mother gave him ten sous; shortly after another came along, and his need seemed to be as great as his predecessor, she also handed him ten sous, and a third needy applicant carried off the rest. The econome, who had nothing for the supper of the Community, was loud in her lamentation; indeed, she imagined all was lost; but the superioress retired to pray and ask—yea, beg for her daily bread, and the daily bread of those under her care. Almost immediately some unknown person brought alms of one hundred crowns, saying it did not matter whence they came, but recommended them to continue to trust in Providence. The Sisters believed it was Saint Joseph, and with unlimited confidence had recourse to him in all their needs.

The Annals relate more obvious miracles yet. One day there was no Mass wine; when she was told of this want by the sacristan Mother M. of the Trinity, in the fullness of her faith and trust in God, put some holy water in the wine barrel. The wine did not fail that whole year, and whenever they expected to have to buy some they found the barrel quite full. Surprise was at its highest pitch when it really did run out; they found that it was so dry that it did not appear to have had any wine in for a long time.

At another time they had no flour, and could not buy any; consequently, they were without bread. The Sisters came to warn the superioress, and told her the worrying news; she went immediately to the choir to pray; while she was in that attitude one of them saw flakes of flour falling into the kneading-trough, and they had enough for that day. This fact soon became public property in and about Rennes, and several ladies made it their business to come to the house and ask for some of this wonderful bread, purely, we conclude, through devotion. The Divine protection was not less sensibly felt when they were digging a well that was needed for the house. Twice it was filled up by the falling in of the embankments after it had been dug forty feet in depth. Mother M. of the Trinity then ordered that one of the Sisters would always remain in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament while they were working at it for the third time. To honor the faith of His servant God permitted that a furious hurricane fill the court with water over night, without one drop being found in the pit that was being dug.

Trials of every description did not fail to overwhelm Mother M. of the Trinity in those beginnings that appeared so brilliant; of course, it is an acknowledged fact that all divine works are sealed and have to be sealed with the cross. The devil strove to destroy the house, and in order to do this, as he thought, in the most delicate way he had the directress accused of teaching errors in the catechism that she taught to the Penitents. The ecclesiastical authorities were solemnly notified, and must needs have theological divines examine into the affair. Not satisfied with responses that were perfectly correct and conformable to the teaching of the Church they resolved that three or four of their number would assist at the catechetical instructions. This surveillance would have disconcerted any one else but Mother M. of the Trinity, but her soul was raised above every human consideration, so she did not seem to mind. She took up her course of instruction before this array of Doctors of Theology and gave it as unconcernedly as if she were alone with the Penitents. After having spoken for entire hours she turned to her examiners, and said to them in her own charming way:: "Well, gentlemen, do you find anything reprehensible in what I have been teaching?" The doctors were very pleased, and gave her, on the contrary, a testimony of their satisfaction regarding the purity of her faith and the solidity of her sentiments.

The House of Rennes was very prosperous when, in 1670, the Blessed Eudes gave his celebrated mission of four months in that city. Daily sermons, the preoccupations incident to the foundation of a seminary, did not prevent him from seeing Mother M. of the Trinity, and of studying with her the means of assuring the commencement and transformation of the house into a regular Monastery of Our Lady of Charity. There could not have been anything more appropriate for the proof of the solid virtue and disinterestedness of Mother M. of the Trinity. She was considered such a perfect Religious that the administrators were convinced that she was the right one in the right place, and intended writing to Rome for permission for her to remain superior for life. This humble Mother, in conjunction with the pious institutor, represented to Bishop de Vieuville that the erection of a convent under the ordinary conditions would render more glory to God, and the difficulty of secular government would be obviated. The prelate then instituted new steps to obtain Religious from Caen. The Blessed Eudes sent the following letter to Mother M. of the Blessed Sacrament Pierre, the first superior of the Order. She expected another at least from the Bishop of Rennes, in which he might demand all or copies of all the documents obtained for the foundation of the Monastery of Caen.

J. M. J.

My very dear Daughter:

I received the copies you sent me, but the certificate did not come. There has been one, but it was a decree which directed only that Caen be informed of the *commodities* or *incommodities* of the town. We have no occasion for that, but for the ones you have. There was one made out later, directing that your letters of the King be registered. I pray you to have one copied soon, and send it to me without delay, for the Bishop of Rennes wants to see it.

I am surprised at what you have written to me—that you cannot send some Sisters here. How comes that, my dear daughter? Do you not find any one willing to come? I cannot believe that the Daughters of the Charity have such little love for God. and so little charity for souls that have cost the Son of God the last drop of His most precious blood. Is it because they have some difficulty about the superioress here? But that would not be kind, nor would it be charitable either.

Is it because you think you ought to demand a dowry, or board money, or the payment of the expenses of those who may come? But I give you my word that nothing in that line will be demanded of you. The president will send his coach to fetch them. When they come, if they are not satisfied they can return, and while they are here your house will not be obliged to buy provisions for them. Of course, it means, too, that we shall be responsible for them in all things while here. Your Institute, by accepting this new house, will be strengthened, and other establishments will be the gainers.

I really do not know why you delay, but one thing I do know, and that is that the demon, enraged against Communities employed in the salvation of souls, does all he can to hinder this design and defer its execution, because he knows the good that would be accomplished, and he wants to put an obstacle to it that will be of use to his machinations.

But why, my dear daughter, are you so reserved with me, who have no other end in view but the glory of God, the salvation of souls and the advantage of your house. Why do you not tell me simply what is the matter, so that I can settle the difference. Surely you can tell me as well in writing as by word of mouth, since letters are never lost.

I cordialize all my dear daughters, and conjure them to have a particular devotion to the Divine Infant Jesus and His Immaculate Mother.

It is in the love of the Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary that I am for you and them, my very dear daughter,

Ever yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary-Priest.*

RENNES, January 19, 1670.

The Annalist of Our Lady of Charity was ignorant of the motives that prevented a letter so urgent as this from bearing fruit, for it certainly failed in its effect. But in different passages she admits that Mother M. of the Blessed Sacrament never had much dealings with the institutor, as she had entered the monastery after the Blessed Eudes had been released from the office of superior; hence, she had not tasted any of the advantages of his direction, so that she had the Constitutions printed without consulting him, and perhaps, she preferred not to ask his advice. Be that as it may the past is so very long past that this letter gives us to understand what a powerful impetus the active institutor would have had over the Order had he been able to exercise his influence in the way that was his by right as institutor. Confronted by such an opposing element he could only encourage Mother M. of the Trinity, and hold out promises that the future would bring better results.

On her part this great soul was not discouraged, but worked indefatigably in organizing her household on the model of that of Caen. Having learned that the Constitutions were printed she procured some, and had them practiced as perfectly as possible. She even went so far as to take the white habit, and give it to her companions; but the fear of failing in her duty in this respect to the Bishop, as she had done so without consulting him, made her acknowledge her fault to him, if fault there were. But the good prelate reassured her, and said very kindly and without any irritability: "So, it was black; now it is white. What does it matter? Remain in peace."

In 1673 Bishop de Vieuville made a visit to the Monastery of Caen. Bishop de Nesmond, Bishop of Bayeux, had taken two Religious of that house to govern that of Bayeux, which bore almost the same name. Here was a good chance for him to reiterate his demand for two Religious for Rennes. His end was, not at that time to form a real monastery, but simply to have Religious there to direct the Penitents. Notwithstanding those propositions were not very favorable his request was granted, and Mother M. of the Blessed Sacrament Pierre chose for the new foundation Sister M. of Saint Julien Leblond and Sister Mary Angelique de Balde, two of the best subjects that the House of Caen possessed.

As we have not been favored by any particular notice concerning the first superior of Rennes, Mother M. of Saint Julien Leblond, we are obliged to be satisfied with what the Annals make known to us. The most striking feature of her character was evidently humility. She hid herself even too much for the good of the house; God had, perhaps, heard her prayer, in not allowing the recital of her virtues to be handed down to us. At the time of the foundation she was forty-one years old. The "Book of the Vows" places her birth about the year 1632, and her profession in 1653, while the Blessed Eudes was still the superior of the Charity. So Mother M. of Saint Julien carried to Rennes traditional veneration for his memory. It was from her that the Sisters, who formed the foundation of Paris, heard the prophecy that the Blessed made regarding that establishment and the numerous crosses that would be their portion.

The history of Sister Mary de Balde offers many extraordinary particulars. Her father belonged to one of the greatest families of Dauphiny. Having had the misfortune of having been engaged in the religious state without a vocation he apostatized, having been enticed by a young lady of his own rank, whom he married. He retired with her into Castres, where he proved himself to be one of the most ardent propagators of the doctrines of Calvin. To this scandalous union were born five children, four of whom were girls. Their mother kept within her dormant soul a germ for future conversion—namely, the habit of reciting the Rosary, and having Masses said in honor of the Blessed Virgin. One day she retired into her oratory, and she prayed this advocate of poor sinners very earnestly, when she heard a voice that said to her: "Take good care of the fruit you are bearing; it shall be consecrated to my service." Penetrated with gratitude for a grace she knew she was totally unworthy of this poor soul vowed to Mary the fruit of her womb, and prayed her that now since it belonged to her to take special care of it.

This predestined child was born on August 20, 1646; she was called Olympia, and at her birth it was seen that she bore the sign of the cross on her forehead, on her stomach and on her shoulders; she was also marked with other impressions formed like nails. She also appeared to be the object of the hatred of the devil. Her childhood offers several wonderful proofs which are hard to doubt. Her education was a very careful one, and notwithstanding the heresy that her parents professed they took care to have her receive a truly Christian training. The young Olympia, under the direction of her father, prepared herself to participate in the Lord's Supper by exercises capable of making Catholics blush for their own carelessness.

God had merciful designs on that family, and brought back to the bosom of the Church M. de Balde who, to escape from his coreligionists, had to quit Castres at midnight, taking strange methods to prevent his flight from being known. Right Reverend M. Gervien was a relative of his; he received him, as well as his son, in his home in Paris. This prelate was Bishop of Bayeux. He placed Mme. de Balde and her daughter in the Convent of the New Converts. The young Olympia was at that time only twelve years old. What was very singular in this case is, that it seems she was the most difficult to bring back to the Truth. In the many discussions they had with those who were endeavoring to bring them back to the faith she made use of texts of Holy Scripture, citing them in Latin, having already acquired that language; indeed, she could speak it quite fluently. According to her own confession she made them understand that conviction alone would compel her to abjure her errors; her repugnance came also from another source—that of seeing her family reduced, through this change of religion, to living on the charity of others. Notwithstanding the delicacy of their proceedings in her regard it cost her very much to receive any favor from others, she who was always more ready to give than to receive.

The abjuration was made with due solemnity, which proved the importance that the Court of Louis XIV attached to the conversion of Protestants. It took place in the Holy Chapel, in the presence of the Court, of six Cardinals and of thirty-four Bishops. After they were received by the Nuncio the *Te Deum* was sung by the Royal musicians. Anne of

Austria provided for these new converts with royal munificence, and gave them every care. M. de Balde separated from his wife; henceforth he would look upon her as his sister, and retired to the vicinity of the Bishop of Bayeux, where he lived piously.

Madame de Balde, penetrated with the same sentiments, was attached to nothing save her young daughter, who remained with her, the Queen having placed the other children elsewhere. Together these two performed all their exercises of piety with a sincerity known only to God and His angels. One day when the young Olympia assisted at the Holy Mass with her mother, these words of Isaiah came vividly to her mind: "Come and drink of the living waters, all you that thirst," and filled her with a lively desire of participating in the holy mysteries, with such vehemence, that she went and threw herself at the feet of the priest, and made a confession of her whole life. She then received in faith and love the Bread of Angels and kept on repeating in her heart, with the Spouse in the Canticles: "I have found Him whom my soul loveth * * * * my beloved is all to me and I am all to Him." The effects of this first Communion were durable. The real Presence was sweet to her heart, and it was so sensibly felt by her, and so persuasive were its wooings that she felt, indeed, her Lover was there. She was never tempted to doubt of this dogma of our holy religion. The difficulties which had tormented her so much regarding the means that God had made use of to draw her to the Holy Roman Catholic Church disappeared forever, and gave place to a lively gratitude, which made her exclaim with the Royal Prophet: "It was necessary that Thou shouldst humble me, in order to learn Thy commandments."

About that time Mlle. de Balde refused, through love for her mother, the post of Maid of Honor in the Court of Queen Anne of Austria, and preferred to retire with her mother to Caen, where Bishop Servien founded, by their desire, a House of New Converts. As the Community was not yet formed, he sent them to the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity where they were joyfully received.

Mother Patin quickly recognized the brilliant qualities of Mlle. de Balde, and several times, notwithstanding her youth, she did not hesitate about consulting her concerning the most important affairs. A young Protestant was placed in the monastery at the same time, and Mlle. de Balde was charged with her instruction; she succeeded so much better than any one else could, since her personal experience had taught her the objections that hesitating souls make ere being convinced, and she was perfectly prepared and capable of eradicating from the mind of her little pupil all tendency towards procrastination in this regard. This first conquest inspired her with an ardent zeal for the salvation of souls. The exercise of that virtue supplied her the means of thanking God for her own conversion. Her progress in all the other virtues was not less marked. Notwithstanding the repugnances of her early life she exercised herself in the practices of the common life with great ardor. In this way she overcame the difficulty of rising early in the morning to assist at meditation with the Community. Her devotion to the holy Mother of God enticed her to make a vow to recite the Rosary and say the Office every day. Her knowledge of the Latin tongue made it more of an attraction for her, and gave her great facility in reciting it. She showed great respect for the ceremonies of the Church, which are so attacked and so ridiculed by Protestants.

Such were her edifying dispositions when she was attacked by an illness so serious as to put her life in danger. Madame de Balde, after having taken care of her day and night, made a heroic act in order to save her life. Her sacrifice was accepted, for at that moment she became better, and the symptoms of the same disease took hold of Madame de Balde herself. The Community was not worried, as her symptoms were rather slight; however, the dear invalid felt that it was her death warrant; had she not offered her life for that of her child? She asked for her confessor, and then told him it was the last time she would need him. She then communicated in the dispositions of a soul awaiting death. Going back to her chamber she went to bed, and three days later, on December 31, 1660, she slept sweetly in the Lord, without any visible sign of suffering, and while her infirmarians were at Mass. Thus God heard her prayers; she asked Him for the grace to die in His holy love, and at the same time she requested of Him to permit her to die unperceived.

The sorrow of Mlle. de Balde was so great that her tears flowed in such abundance it was feared she would lose her vision. Her father begged her to accept the post offered her by the Queen, or at least, if she did not want to go to the

Court, to make up her mind to retire to the Abbey-au-Bois, where one of his sisters was a Religious. She refused both propositions, and obtained his permission to remain in the Charity. Mother Patin found in this young lady all the necessary qualifications for the religious life, and was astonished at not seeing her enter the novitiate, especially after the earnest desire she manifested of remaining in the monastery. This was precisely what kept her. As this desire was not sensible enough she treated the idea as juvenile, afraid to entertain it, even feeling a sort of compassion in regard to her companions who testified more ardor for the religious life. God brought her to a sense of what He desired of her by a long and severe illness, which lasted about a year. Being reduced to great weakness she was not even able to read; she did not know how to occupy her long hours of suffering; she applied herself to meditating on the Passion of our Divine Savior, and drew so much fruit from it that she made her resolutions to live and die for God alone. She aspired now only to entering the novitiate so soon as she recovered.

This favor was granted her. After making a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Deliverance Mlle. de Balde commenced her postulancy on December 8, 1664, at the age of eighteen years. The young novice endeavored to acquire, from her initial step in the novitiate, that true humility for which she was always remarkable, putting all her wits together so as to hide in the shade the knowledge, and other talents she possessed, so they would not be perceived by her companions. She worked very hard to repress that natural air of elegance that was hers by force of habit, and acquired as an heirloom. The mistress of the novices, perhaps, attached too much importance to this defect, and to aid her in correcting herself of it she passed no occasion by in which she had an opportunity of humiliating her. These frequent and very often public corrections were accepted with courage and submission, and these humiliations contributed very materially in effecting a solid basis of perfection.

The vocation of Mlle. de Balde was subjected to a more severe trial still when obedience imposed on her the employment of dispenser. The work was above her strength, and completely at variance with her natural capabilities and generosity; indeed, so heavy was the burden thus imposed upon her that she suffered more in her heart than in her body. A terrible feeling of discouragement assailed her, and her prayers seemed incapable of obtaining the grace to surmount it; the demon seemed to glory in the excess of her suffering. One night, when she was more strongly tempted than usual, she cried out with fervor: "My God, please do not permit my enemy to chase me from this holy Community, where you gave me the grace to enter." At the same moment it seemed to her that she felt there was some one near her, which made her demand hurriedly: "Who is there?" "It is I," was the reply in a very audible voice. "Who, who?" she asked with vivacity, and the same voice replied: "I am who am." This all-powerful word was sufficient to chase away the tempter, and incidentally the temptation, and a complete calm, undisturbed and undisturbing, stole over the senses of Sister Angelique. It was in this condition that her mistress found her when she came to her bedside to see what was the matter with her. She enjoyed this peace to the end of her life, and thereto was joined such a tender and constant love for her vocation that she frequently repeated: "The religious state is so agreeable to God that I would be willing to remain here for all eternity, and never die, if such were His holy Will."

After this victory her progress in all the virtues was more rapid and more marked. She was admitted to profession on November 21, 1666. From that day her fervor never abated. She was always the first at the most fatiguing exercises, notwithstanding her continual infirmities. The superiors were obliged to moderate her mortifications, and ordered her to eat whatever was served at table. It was sufficient that something was tasty and pleasing to her palate; she would not touch it. Her early training caused her to long for what pleased her fancy; in fact, it had degenerated into a passion; by the violence she did herself in this particular the commonest things in food and clothing satisfied her. For the same reason she did not or would not associate with unmannerly persons; now she made it a strict obligation of treating cordially with all manners of persons, cultured or uncultured, especially showing a particular tenderness for those who had given her pain. She asked permission to bleed herself, so as not to be touched by the surgeon, so extremely modest and reserved was she before others. The reader will recall that young professed who was elected the first superior of the Order, after the death of Mother Patin. The Mothers of the Visitation had, however, her esteem and confidence, and the life of Mother Patin, written by her, by order of Mother M. of the Blessed Sacrament, is the best proof of this.

The talents of the new Sister showed themselves best in the charges of secretary and mistress of the boarders; she formed those young souls with such firmness and love that several of them later on embraced the religious life.

Such were the Religious the Community of Caen sent to found the second monastery of the Order. In union with Mother M. of the Trinity they easily and promptly gave to this new house a powerful impetus, a marvelous fecundity. They left Caen on May 14, 1673, under the guardianship of Reverand M. Gray, confessor to the Community, and Mlle. Menard whom Mother M. of the Trinity had sent to fetch them; they arrived in Rennes on the vigil of Pentecost, the 20th of that same month. The Vicar-General came the next day to confirm the election of Mother M. of Saint Julien Leblond. The whole house wore a joyous aspect; no one seemed more happy than Mother M. of the Trinity, who saw the realization of her fondest hopes. On account of her long novitiate in Caen, and the rank she occupied, it was decided that she should be admitted immediately to solemn profession. The ceremony took place very quietly in presence of the Grand-Vicar and of the Mothers of the foundation. As her four companions had been bound only by simple vows they forthwith commenced their novitiate.

Bishop de la Vieuville was very pleased at the arrival of the Sisters, but he persisted, none the less, that all he wanted was just enough Sisters for a temporary government of the house; he said that so far there was quite enough. Mme. d' Argouge, the foundress, and some of the principal benefactors of the house were of the same opinion; the house of Rennes should not be in charge of any form of government that would in time become onerous. This state of incertitude lasted about six months, when they were inspired to make a novena to the holy Virgin. This good Mother seemed to have been waiting for this appeal to change the dispositions of the prelate and the principal benefactors. The novena was hardly finished than all permissions were granted.

Here are the terms the Sisters related themselves to the Community of Caen, in a letter dated November 18, 1672:

LIVE JESUS AND MARY!

My very Honored Mother and very dear Sisters:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! After the winter comes the springtime, and after sorrow comes joy. At present, my very honored Mother and very dear Sisters, we can say with all assurance, *Our Monastery of Rennes.* We are really established, and received the contract from his Lordship before a notary, with all the privileges we could wish for, and all this through the kindness of our illustrious foundress, Madame d'Argouge. Her zeal was so much more remarkable, as she was violently opposed to it at the start. Now she testifies to us the most unbounded affection; however, she does not want to hear it spoken of as an establishment. Since we came here we have had nothing but uncertainty; very often we thought we would have to return to you without being able to accomplish anything. But Divine Providence, Who brought us here, has at length lifted away all obstacles, and disposed every one in such a way that those who were most opposed to us have been the foremost in benefiting us, like this lady. Her opposition almost made us despair of succeeding, knowing well that it was on her word everything depended.

We did not wish to bother you concerning our affairs; we knew if we did that you would be worrying. So, like good Sisters, we kept the bitterness to ourselves. Now we make known to you our joy. It is grand to see the blessings that our Lord has bestowed upon our Institute. For if we would narrate to you all the difficulties we had to encounter, before we arrived thus far, you would see how admirable are the ways of God in order to arrive at the execution of His adorable designs.

Some days before the feast of All Saints, during the retreat that was made, our good President assisted at the service that we celebrated for M. du Plessis. At the end she heard us say three times: *Monstra te esse matrem*, and wished to know why we repeated this strophe so devoutly. Having told Madame the Vicountess of Arcis, a person of great piety and very zealous for our Institute, that it was to obtain from the Blessed Virgin our establishment she said that at the moment we said it she felt her heart touched, as though some one struck her, and that the thought that she had come at this time meant she was to fulfil some great duty. She then undertook this affair with so much ardor that she did everything there was to be done to get us what we asked for. Her change of sentiment was a signal for that of our venerated prelate also. She wished even to be associated with our Institute, and asked us for a silver heart like ours and a *little robe.*

You can judge, my very honored Mother, and very dear Sisters, whether we have reason or not to thank God for thus sweetening the bitterness of parting, by the consolation of seeing a second house of our Order. But as the most beautiful roses often produce thorns, our joy has been mixed with poignant sorrow, on seeing our dear Sister M. of the Trinity obliged to interrupt her solitude on the eighth day, by an acute attack of pleurisy. We were very much afraid we would lose her, as her case was considered very dangerous. At present she is out of danger, so we earnestly recommend her to your prayers. We also present you with the respect and obedience of our little band. It is composed of seven Sisters wearing the habit, of Madame des Arcis, and of our Sister Menard, two boarders and thirty Penitents, all being very desirous like ourselves, my very honored and dear Mother and very dear Sisters, of being

Your very humble and obedient servants in our Lord,
Sister M. of Saint Julien Leblond,
Sister M. Angelique de Balde.

CHAPTER III

SUPERIORITY OF MOTHER M. OF SAINT JULIEN LEBLOND AND MOTHER M. ANGELIQUE DE BALDE—POVERTY AND NARROWNESS OF THE MONASTERY—DEATH OF SISTER M. OF THE PRESENTATION TARDAT—IMPROVEMENTS MADE BY MOTHER DE BALDE—HER MAXIMS—HER DEATH

THE Annalist remarks that Mother M. of Saint Julien had much to suffer from poverty during her superiority. The administrators gave up to the Sisters the care of providing for the needs of the house. The revenues were small, and they were overburdened with the rather heavy obligation of receiving persons whom the police justices wished to send to the house; and the place being so small, their troubles really became tenfold greater than their poverty. It is difficult to imagine a monastery, where about one hundred persons lived, existing in such a narrow place. They were surrounded by the street and the city walls; their lodgings and yard were about sixty-five feet in length, barely sixty feet in width, a square of less than 4,000 feet. The exigency of space is remindful of a monastery in Rome, established under pretty much the same conditions, and where the Religious are called the Buried Living. This sad state of things continued until the government of Mother de Balde, who began to build a larger and more commodious lodging, and she obtained, after a thousand contradictions, the permission to make a little garden near the dykes of the city walls. Still and withal the monastery was not yet large enough. It was easy for outsiders to penetrate through the enclosure; the circular letters tell many disagreeable happenings on account of all this inconvenience. The repairs that were continually made, to offset these depredations, would have been enough to build an entire monastery. This proves how necessary it is to choose a good location.

Under the respective administrations of Mother Saint Julien and Mother Angelique, who succeeded each other until

1703, the novitiate was flourishing, and the very best families gave their daughters to holy religion in the House of Rennes. Their dowries permitted Mother de Balde to undertake the most urgent constructions. These young Religious were formed to the spirit of the Institute by their able directresses, and they were soon capable of giving subjects for the foundation of Guingamp in 1676, and in Vannes in 1683.

Almighty God was also desirous of having the new house represented at the foot of His throne in Paradise. He made choice of a young Religious of admirable purity and candor, Mary of the Presentation Tardat, niece of Mlle. Menard.

The short notice that is given of her represents to us this young Sister as an angel in human form. Nothing childish was seen in her, and when she was seven or eight years old meditation became her delight; the spiritual entertainment of her pious mother was her happiness. From that time she desired to become a Religious, and throughout her life this was her ardent desire—not only to be a Religious, but to be a perfect one. She had to defer her design until her age would allow her to enter, and while waiting she became a Tertiary of the Order of Saint Francis, and observed all the austerities with the utmost exactitude.

When she was in her twelfth year the love of silence and recollection made it appear as though her character was sombre and whimsical; but it was sufficient to warn her of this defect, and tell her it was displeasing to God, to see that she corrected it quickly.

The house of Rennes was then in its initial state, and was directed by her aunt, Mlle. Menard; our little girl commenced to help her in the direction of the Penitents. A Jesuit Father sometimes came to the house to give conferences to the inmates; he called the little Tardat his angel, on account of her angelic purity, and desired her to be present at all his exhortations to draw down on them the blessings of heaven.

When it was possible for her to be admitted to the novitiate she asked for and received the holy habit. Sister M. of the Presentation wore it only four days when she was taken with hemorrhages. The Community understood then that it would not enjoy very long the edification that was given them by this model novice. Sister M. of the Presentation kept herself in continual union with God, and in her talks with her directress she protested that it was her resolution to die, rather than fail deliberately in the least point of the Rule. As her weakness increased the Community proposed that she pronounce her vows. This was the height of her ambition; after the ceremony, she said: "Now I do not fear death, since I have the consolation of being a Daughter of Our Lady of Charity." The Sisters could speak to her without the least fear; those conversations were agreeable to her, and furnished her with occasions of manifesting her desire to go to heaven to see and contemplate Almighty God.

After having had the happiness of receiving the Holy Viaticum several times, on Friday, May 3, 1676, about two o'clock in the afternoon, her excessive weakness made the Sister who was on duty fear that her last moments were near, and said to her: "I believe, my dear Sister, that our Lord will give you the grace to die at the same hour that He did; without doubt He is coming for you, so prepare yourself for His coming." The sweet little invalid could hardly express her joy at the good news, and answered: "Ah, it is then the hour that I have so long desired! But Mother is not here; I beg you to go and call her." The Mother Superior entered. The dying Sister showed how happy she was to be able to go and be eternally united to God; she then renewed her vows with tender devotion, and asked pardon of the Community. Her confessor having arrived, he gave her the last absolution, and suggested to her many acts of union with God, said the prayers for the agonizing, and shortly after she breathed forth her pure soul into the hands of her Creator. The House of Rennes counted on that day one representative in heaven. This death bore all the characteristics of predestination; the beauty that shone on her countenance after death was a new proof of this sanctity.

Mother M. Angelique de Balde was elected superioress for the first time in 1679. We have seen the terrible temptation she was a prey to at the beginning of her religious career when she was named dispenser. Her brilliant victory gave her, without doubt, a special grace to direct the temporals of the Community. Under her administration improvements, judged heretofore impossible, were accomplished. For a long time the Religious had but one choir in common with the boarders and the Penitents. The able superioress intended to make a complete separation. She also built a large addition, which was needed on account of the increase of the Community. Her perseverance enabled her to obtain the grant of the trenches or dykes belonging to the city, and made a garden of the same for the use of the Sisters.

It seemed that such material cares would absorb all the activity of this good Mother, but such was not the case. Her solicitude for the spiritual direction of her monastery made her most vigilant in that regard.

Mother de Balde had made an exhaustive study of the Holy Scriptures, and of all the ascetic authors. She made use of all this knowledge in her chapters for the benefit of the Sisters, and to give them instructions both solid and varied. More advantages yet accrued from this, as all the superiors rendered themselves familiar with those spiritual readings. This knowledge was most requisite for them, as it helped them materially in the direction of the souls confided to their care. One superioress formed in this manner gave to her monastery a great moral and intellectual uplift. These observations agree in a great measure with the work given to the mistresses of the Penitents. The direction of their flocks present many difficulties, especially in our times, and a serious preparation for this solemn duty is indispensable.

Happily, the Annals have kept some records regarding the maxims of Mother de Balde. The reading of them will give a fair idea of the salutary influence exerted on all around her by this pious and intelligent Religious. Here is her doctrine on the *vows*. Her depth of view, even when it soared towards heavenly things, was wonderful. Her thoughts are strenuous, and often clothed in recent language, albeit in a manner most appropriate:

GENERAL IDEA OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE.

Every day in the life of a soul consecrated to God ought to be marked with some new victory. The vine must be pruned continually so as to bear the fruit expected by the Lord of the vineyard, so that it may bear fruit for eternal life. We ought to purify our intentions, even to the last moment of our existence, even though we find no difficulties in the practice of virtue.

Our holy Constitutions declare that religion, or rather our Congregation, is our Mount of Calvary where the chaste spouses of Jesus Christ ought to be spiritually crucified with Him. We are not called to the Mount of Thabor to contemplate Him there in His glory, but to dwell at the foot of the cross, to learn there detachment, obedience, poverty and perfect charity.

The whole of eternity being destined to enjoy Jesus glorified, it is but just that the present life be occupied in serving Jesus crucified, and conforming ourselves to Him. We must apply ourselves to meditate well on the Sacred Passion. We ought and must go to Him by the way He has traced out for us. God has so ordained that only those who do violence to themselves can enter into heaven. The Sacred Humanity of Jesus entered it only by bearing His cross; He desires that we imitate Him. It should, therefore, be our glory to walk in His footsteps.

Saint John, in the Apocalypse, declared that he one day saw our Lord on a white charger, clothed in a robe dyed with blood, and wearing on His head a multitude of thorns. A Father of the Church, explaining this passage, says that the robe dyed in blood signified the victories of the holy Martyrs, with which our Lord was pleased to adorn Himself, and that the crown or multitude of thorns worn on His Head were the acts of penance, humility, patience and mortification of the saints. When we do violence to our own humor, when we subdue our passions, and repress our natural sentiments, we lay a crown upon the Head of Jesus Christ. What glory and what consolation to crown Him Who shall one day crown us!

The trouble we feel in the practice of virtue ought not discourage us; it diminishes by exercising it. It was thus with the mysterious book that Ezechiel was ordered to eat; although it was full of maledictions, lamentations and regrets the prophet found it sweet and agreeable to the taste. In the same way the heart is never more satisfied than after having refused some satisfaction to its depraved appetites.

By the grace of God we have overcome great difficulties; do we now allow ourselves to be stopped by slight obstacles? It is usual for lax souls, like the Israelites of the tribes of Reuben and Gad who, after leaving Egypt and having come to the Jordan, asked Moses to allow them to rest on the banks of the river, "because," they told him, "this land is good to provision our herds." It was in vain that Moses represented to them the great advantages of the land of promise—the short journey that still lay before them. They would not be convinced. The place was good for pasturing their herd and that was enough for them.

Would we not be more blamable than those Israelites if, after having quitted the Egypt of the world, living a long time in religion, and not yet having passed over the Jordan, where the waters of tribulation come down from heaven, we would prefer to remain and graze our animals—that is to say, the appetites of our depraved nature? We ought to have more generosity, and finish what, by the grace of God, we have commenced, for only perseverance will gain the crown.

We ought not to put a limit to our perfection. When we have attained one virtue we must work to acquire others, not through a spirit of vanity, but to carry out the designs of our Creator. Since our soul has the honor of being molded to the image and likeness of God we ought, as much as it is possible, to apply ourselves incessantly to make it resemble its divine Model, for it is written: "Be you perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect."

THOUGHTS ON THE VOWS OF RELIGION.

A Religious, in order to accomplish the vows of her profession, ought to be continually, in spirit, a victim in the hands of Divine Providence, as Isaac was in the hands of his father. Isaac was laden with the wood for the sacrifice, and he allowed himself to be conducted whither they would. He only asked where was the victim; his father replied: "The Lord will provide." He was satisfied; he asked no more questions. Having come to the mountain he aided his father to make up the funeral pile; he saw himself bound, saw the arm of his father raised to give him the death blow; he did not say a word; he was satisfied to adore the will of God, which he recognized in the order of his father. Behold, my dear Sisters, such ought to be the perfection of our sacrifice. We are required to give up our own understanding and will, in expectation of the death of the body, which is inevitable. This death of our understanding and will ought to present charming ideas to us, since we only die to ourselves in order to live only in and for God.

"How long, O ye children of men," cries out the Royal Prophet, "will you love vanity and seek after lying?" We love vanity when we love our own interests, which are vain and illusive; it is to seek after lies if we seek our own glory and self-esteem. We should die, then, to our passions, to our inclinations, and to all our desires; to have only one desire, that of living the life of Jesus immolated on the cross. O hidden life, annihilated life, crucified life, thou art the life of God Himself; after our profession it is not we that live, but it is Jesus Christ that liveth in us.

We should use the three powers of our soul only for God. Our understanding ought to be occupied only in knowing Him, our memory in remembering His benefits, to render Him continual thanks. We must forget our friends and our father's house, not to remember we were ever in the world, only to thank God that He has given us the grace to leave it forever. We should not only love God, but desire to please Him at all times and in all places. If our will belongs to God all the rest will follow. It is love that gives value and merit to our actions, and it resides in our will. The wish to do much for God. and fine speeches concerning piety and the virtues, do not count before God Who values only the charity that produces them.

Properly speaking, all exterior acts of virtue are agreeable to God only in so far as they testify the interior sacrifice that Divine love makes in our heart. This divine love is in itself the priest and the fire, which ought to burn continually and sacrifice all the sentiments that have not the glory of God for their beginning and end.

It is necessary, then, to overthrow the axiom which says that the heart is the first organ to live and the last to die; for in the order of grace the heart ought to be the first to die—that is to say, the first victim that should be presented to God. It is through it that we ought to commence our conversion. When the heart is gained reformation is easy.

If we truly love God nothing will be capable of interfering with our happiness. We can say with the Apostles: "Who shall separate me from the charity of Jesus Christ?" The love of God governs the soul with a charm that is full of sweetness. It does not wish to be forced; it reduces hearts to obedience with an attraction than which nothing can be more soft and sweet; it attracts them with the odor of its perfume.

OBEDIENCE TO THE SMALL OBSERVANCES.

Obedience, to be perfect, ought to be prompt, holy and blind. Much labor is needed before we can arrive that far; but in truth, the peace, the repose one feels when one has arrived at this degree of obedience, renders one indifferent to what else might happen. We can never deceive ourselves in obedience. "We are happy," said the prophet Baruch, "because we are instructed in the things that are agreeable to God." My dear Sisters, since we are assured that by obeying we perform the will of God we should, then, make the entire sacrifice of our will. It is this perfect obedience that will make our actions meritorious. We know what the Lord replied to Isaac when that prophet said to Him: "Lord, we have humbled ourselves before you, and you seem not to remember it; we have fasted, and you have not hearkened to us." "It is," responded the Lord, "because in your fasting was found your own will." We should fear a similar reproach.

Our superiors hold for us the place of God; we ought to listen to them with profound respect, and receive their orders without murmuring exteriorly or interiorly. "It is not against us," said Moses and Aaron, formerly, to the people of Israel, "that you have murmured; it is against the Lord." And God spoke to Samuel saying: "It is not you whom they have rejected, but they have rejected me."

Our superiors always have the right to reprehend us, and we are always wrong if we complain or excuse ourselves. The censures of our Mothers ought to be more precious to our humility than their caresses to our self-love. We ought to regard and execute with respect the smallest observances. David said that his heart had become dry, because he had forgotten to eat his bread. The little subjections of religion are as a celestial bread which sustains the life of grace within us; if we neglect to eat it we shall grow feeble and languishing in the service of God.

Those little observances appear little things, but being well practiced become as so many darts flung up into the Heart of God, and, like the hairs of the Spouse, they ravish His Heart.

ON POVERTY.

Religious poverty, to be perfect, should be more of the affection than of effect—that is to say, that it consist more in interior detachment than in exterior abnegation. It is not in the loss of temporal goods, nor in walking barefoot, that holy poverty consists. Such are good practices for those whom God calls to a vocation that demands this; but for us, we are called to the nudity of the heart. No possessions are allowed us, not even the possession of ourselves. God has acquired this by the shedding of His Precious Blood. Be then disposed to be in need of everything when obedience demands it, and we shall acquire great merits by missing nothing. What we have by the permission of our superiors we may keep, provided we are always ready to give it up when occasion or superiors demand it. We should ask with humility and confidence whatever we need. The poor have nothing save what they ask for; a Religious ought to have nothing to give of what she has received from God, which tends to edify the neighbor very much, for a Religious owns nothing; therefore, has nothing to give.

ZEAL FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS.

Zeal for the salvation of souls being the principal end of our Institute, we ought incessantly strive to render ourselves capable of so holy an employment. The first means is to work for our own sanctification; the good works of the just are as so many voices beseeching the mercy of God.

Sinners are the children of the woes of Jesus; He made them His children on the cross; He loved them, He feared to lose them, and it is easy to find some one whose solicitude for them would appease His wrath. God says in Ezechiel: "I have sought among men some one who would put a barrier between us, and who would take the part of the earth against me, in order that I would not suffer its loss, but I found none." We ought to fear that instead of serving as a barrier against the anger of God we only hinder the effusion of His graces by our bad dispositions, and are the cause of the little fruit we gain in this employment. We should commence from this moment to work for the salvation of those poor souls, by our own conversion. "He who shall do and teach," says our Lord, "shall be great in the kingdom of heaven." We should remark that He said: *"He who shall do,"* and Saint Luke says of Him that "He began to do and to teach." All that this good Savior has done has been done only for the salvation of souls. We are united here to be the cooperators of the Word Incarnate. What an honor for a creature to be chosen by God to cooperate with Him in the salvation of souls, and with his grace to drag them from the abyss of sin, and make them objects of the Divine mercy.

"The charity of Jesus Christ presseth us," says Saint Paul. Imagine ourselves, M. C. S., Jesus Christ addressing us in these words, which He formerly addressed to His Apostles: "I desire you to become fishers of souls, and your nets should be the bonds of charity, and the baits sweetness and patience."

We must not worry concerning the little fruit of our work; each one shall receive according to her work, not according to her success. Our Lord did not convert all men; although He was God He met with souls who were rebellious to His graces and His instructions. We must, then, adore His eternal designs, and neglect nothing that duty demands of us. It is for us to plant, to water and to cultivate the vineyard of the Lord; but it is to Him we look for the increase. Strive, then, not to be unworthy of so great and so holy a ministry. When we draw no other fruit from our labors than an increase of our patience, shall we not be well recompensed?

We are the martyrs of holy love. Faith has no need of our blood for its establishment, but charity demands our zeal to govern souls where sin has placed them. Can we reflect on the immensity of our vocation without animating ourselves to fulfill our duties perfectly?

Horror for sin ought to compel us to destroy it first in ourselves, by the practice of all the virtues, in order that we may give to others out of our own superabundance; not to be like the lamp which is consumed by burning, but like the sun which communicates its light without being obscured.

It is necessary, then, that our charity for our Penitents be sweet, humble and disinterested, according to these words of the Apostle: "Clothe yourselves with the bowels of mercy, and remember that the servant and the master, the slave and he who is free, are alike before God."

ADVICE ON THE GUIDANCE OF SOULS.

In the matter of spiritual government we ought to comport ourselves in regard to souls after the manner of God and the angels, by inspirations, illuminations, remonstrances, solicitations, patience and meekness. We must, like the Divine

Spouse, knock at the door of their hearts. If they do not listen to us we must suggest to them the words of eternal life; if they repulse us we must wait and support this rebuff with kindness. God does not stop sending His inspirations, although they repel His attractions, and say to them: "Leave me."

Arbitrary spirits, who wish every one to bend to their will, aspire to an authority which Almighty God does not make use of, since He gives man perfect freedom of will. Such arbitrary spirits would evince a haughtier dominion than Lucifer, who wished to be like God.

In commanding we should do so only by persuasion and prayer, remembering what Saint Peter said: "Feed the flock committed to your care, not by constraint, as if you were their masters, but by your example."

Mother Mary Angelique afterwards studied with much delicacy the relations with the neighbor. She finished by reflections on the virtues proper for the sanctification of each particular Sister:

ON FRATERNAL CHARITY.

I cannot recommend fraternal charity too much. The Wise Man said: "The brother who assists his brother is like an impregnable city." We should try and preserve that holy union that reigns in our midst, and for this purpose we must have an ardent charity and great patience. We ought to fear the terrible menace that God made, by the Prophet Osee to those who troubled the peace between brethren, when he said: "If the soldiers fight between themselves they can do nothing; all is lost."

It is requisite that our sweetness of disposition shows in the exterior; having an affable and fetching manner. Be always ready to render a service to every one, ready to do all and suffer all, remembering that a servant of God ought to breathe sweetness and charity.

Profit by contradictions, in order to increase in virtue. Let us imagine that God says to us: "Fear not, it is I who have disposed of everything." Surmount courageously all the difficulties to be met with in the practice of fraternal charity. In our exercises of zeal we should have no reason to trouble ourselves; we ought to be persuaded that all the misfortunes that could befall us cannot be greater than to lose patience and peace.

ON CONVERSATION.

Good conversation is the touch-stone of the faculty of finding out the sanctity of a person. There must be a finished sanctity to acquire a conversation above reproach. Conversation, to be good, ought not to blacken any one's reputation, neither by ourselves nor by those with whom we speak; our conversation cannot be perfect if we do not restrain ourselves in everything we speak about.

It is not enough to govern the tongue wisely; we must regulate the tone of our voice, even its accents, and all our actions and movements in that connection. The peace of a soul, always attentive to God, ought to be seen in the whole exterior.

We should know how to speak differently to different persons, and fix it so that we reply to them in such a way that they may go away from us satisfied. We must guard ourselves from two dangerous extremes. Enter into their hearts by a wise familiarity, but we should fly lightmindedness and indiscretion. Be grave and sedate to keep up your authority, but we must not affect an air of haughtiness that would draw down on us the animadversion of those persons whose salvation we are seeking. Virtue loves not affected manners; it is content to be civil, modest and genteel, but not haughty.

We should often reflect on this sentence of Saint James: "He who sins not in his words is a perfect man." Our words ought to be meek and humble; we ought never to say anything contrary to charity, nor to make others praise us. If any one should praise us we ought to listen in humble silence, which will soon put a stop to such vain discourse.

We should listen with meekness to things that displease us; yield in contradictions and contestations with an air that signifies neither disdain nor contempt. There should never appear any sentiment of preference of our own sentiments over those of others.

Finally, we ought in all our discourses conserve simplicity and religious modesty, never to speak of ourselves being our maxim. It would be foolish to speak well of ourselves, and pride in speaking ill of ourselves.

ON SILENCE.

Silence ought to be religiously kept. It is so necessary for the perfection of our state, that we cannot dispense ourselves without ruining ourselves. All the Fathers agree in saying that a great talker cannot be a good Religious, and Saint Ambrose adds that he would rather see a Religious rendered dumb, than hear her speak too much.

There is nothing so disgraceful than a dissipated Religious, always ready to give her advice, and give vent to her ideas. "The wise man," says Ecclesiasticus, "speaks only at the right time; but the light-headed and inconsiderate man pays attention neither to time nor measure."

According to the sentiment of Saint Chantal it is better to reply in a few words to a Sister who asks us for an explanation during silence, than to make some unintelligible signs, or to send her away in a dry, hurried manner.

It is more important to take all manner of means to preserve peace. I do not say that it is necessary to neglect duties to keep the peace with unreasonable persons, who often demand acts of condescension which are contrary to our obligations, but only that we must act with every one in a spirit of charity. If we allow ourselves to be governed by these holy movements we can say with David: "Lord, all my speech shall be conformed to your will."

THE HIDDEN LIFE.

We should remain hidden in God, and let it appear that we are capable of nothing, unless obedience obliges us to appear; when we are obliged to speak to persons of the world we ought to reflect that religious souls are the salt of the earth, and that we must leave in the hearts of those with whom we speak some taste of God, and of the virtues represented by the religious life. The Archangel Gabriel found the Holy Virgin full of grace, because her heart was void of creatures, and we, on the contrary, are often destitute of God, because we too often appear and converse with the world. We should quit all to seek the kingdom of God, which is above us, and if we do so we shall taste the joy and peace of the Holy Spirit.

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES.

Retreat.—We ought to cherish the time of our retreats; those are the days singled out by the Lord for our sanctification. Happy days, precious moments, how we should profit by them! A retreat is the banishment of all creatures, and our near approach to God: in these two words we find the details of this important exercise. Our Spouse wishes to be alone with us to entertain us better. Take care that among His words of sweetness and peace we do not hear some that are not so agreeable. There ought to be a division of soul and body if we would enjoy the interior communication with God; hence, we must die to ourselves; without this death there is no life.

Our Lord tells us that we must seek the kingdom of God; we must understand by this that other kingdoms are of no consequence. The devil has his kingdom, since Jesus Christ calls him in several places in the Gospel the prince of the world. There is the kingdom of self-love, which has many partisans. Finally, there is the kingdom of grace, which is that to which our Lord invites us. By the grace of God we have renounced the kingdom of the devil, enclosed ourselves in the cloister and professed the maxims that are opposed to him; but the opposing kingdom of self-love is very often met with in Communities, and is greatly to be feared. There are found in religious houses persons who seem to live only by the spirit of grace, and act only according to the lights of faith; however, if we were to penetrate into the depths of their hearts we would see nothing but self-love. Virtue has a certain brilliancy, which always causes it to be admired where it resides; hence, the desire of honor and esteem is often the motive of those works that seem good. Therefore, take care; pride cast the first of the angels from the heights of heaven to the deepest depths of the abyss; it can also overthrow the most solid pillars of religion, if the first stone is not solidly laid by humility.

The difficulty of being saved is not only for persons of the world. Our Lord has shown us by the similitude of the ten virgins, five of whom had the misfortune of being excluded from the nuptials; that ought to make those persons tremble who are consecrated to the service of God. Let us not, my dear Sisters, be like those foolish virgins who were contented to follow, but who did not take care to animate their actions with that lively charity that renders them worthy of eternal life.

We should observe that we have promised to God to observe our rules, as our holy Rules ordain, not like slaves under a law, but as the tender and faithful spouses whose delights are in the exact and faithful observance of their duties.

ON PRAYER.—Prayer being the most important exercise of the spiritual life, and one of the most profitable, it is most essential that we instruct ourselves in the best way to make it. As a remote preparation we should be continually attentive to the presence of God, Who hinders the spirit of dissipation, and which helps us in all that we do, and keeps us in a constant desire to please Him. We are so easily distracted in our prayers and meditations, because we bring to them a wholly dissipated mind. We pour out our hearts on useless amusements; we give our senses all the liberty they desire; we watch and we listen to all the little trifles that present themselves, we live in continual agitation, and we wish to recover our quietude whenever it pleases us.

The privation of His lights and graces that God sends us ought to make us enter into sentiments of fear and humility, and ought not to be regarded with indifference as simple trials; it is often a punishment for secret pride that God sends to souls who ought to have an humble sentiment of themselves, and make them keep themselves in entire purity of heart.

HOLY COMMUNION.—Our dispositions for Holy Communion ought to have some relation with those of our Lord in this Divine Sacrament. Jesus comes to us as a victim sacrificed to the will of His Father, and immolated for our love; we also ought to go to Him as so many victims consecrated to His love. In this august Sacrament He gives Himself entirely to us; we, too, ought to deliver ourselves entirely to Him, for when we give Him all, except ourselves, He cannot be satisfied; for it us He seeks, and not our gifts.

Reading and Examen.—In our lectures we should think only of learning how to acquire virtue and how to practice it. We should die to the desire of satisfying our curiosity and self-love. If it is God's will that we should know great things, He is the Master of Doctors, and He will instruct us.

We ought often meditate on these words of the Prophet: "Hope in the Lord, and do good; cultivate the earth and you shall be nourished with the fruits thereof." We must examine with care the manner in which we cultivate our ground—that is to say, our senses and our reasonable faculties. We must visit this mystical Jerusalem by a diligent but peacable examen.

Mother M. Angelique de Balde, after having been regularly deposed in 1685, was reelected in 1691. It was then that she finished the most of the improvements that she had commenced during her first superiority. Her watchfulness prevented one of the workmen from being crushed by the unexpected falling of an old dwelling house.

She became very ill after having been reelected in 1694. She never recovered completely; a cancer developed in her right breast. Nothing of all this was capable of hindering her from continuing her occupations, nor could it put a stop to her regular attendance at the exercises. To the anxious prayers of the Sisters to take care of herself she would quietly answer: "When I shall be released from the charge of superior I will take repose, and will have more leisure to take care of myself, but for the time being I must accomplish the duties of my office."

Right Reverend M. de Lavardin, successor to Bishop de la Vieuville, had the highest esteem possible for this good Mother. Fearing that the poverty of the monastery could not afford her all the aid that was required he sent her quite a considerable sum of money to provide for her needs.

But nothing was capable of curing this unpitying disease. It continued its course after the deposition of Mother de Balde. Named Directress of the Novitiate, her sufferings increased; she then said to the novices that she regretted that she was unable to give them the care they expected from her experience, but it was not necessary to sadden them, and that the arm of God was not shortened. "He who plants and waters can do nothing; only God can give the increase; if you are faithful in following the lights of His grace, you need fear nothing."

God willed to purify and heap up her merits by a martyrdom of eight months. An acute inflammation spread all over the side where the cancer was, and caused her intolerable sufferings. After July 28, 1697, she did not leave her room, except to hear Mass. If the infirmarians wished her not to do so, on account of her acute sufferings, which were the result of the least agitation, she would reply: "We must allow the sick to go to their doctor. I am always better when I can go to Mass and Holy Communion." When it was impossible for her to go she would open the window of her room, which was opposite the church, so as not to be deprived of her only consolation. Her retentive memory kept count of all the Masses that were said, and she had a great facility in uniting her prayers with those of the priest.

The excessive swelling of her arm soon obliged the good Mother to pass days and nights in the same position. She did not appear either fatigued nor weary. A token of compassion, given by the Sisters, often elicited this reply: "One arm is sufficient for any one who can do nothing."

It would be impossible to relate here all the examples of virtue she gave. In particular, the patience of this holy Religious ought to be dwelt upon; it certainly was marvelous during that long and cruel malady. Mother M. of Saint Julien, who succeeded her, placed her with one of the novices; the humble mistress regarded her as one of her infirmarians, and took all that the young Sister gave her, without asking her why she gave it; she did not even wish to drink without her permission. Mother M. Angelique ordered her, besides, to notify her every evening of all the faults that she noticed during the day.

This novice slept during seven months in the chamber of the poor invalid; during all that time she never asked her for a single thing. When the young Sister did not notice her wants the good Mother added this defect of care to all her other sufferings, and proved her joy by smiling at her lack of perception.

Some time before her death she wished to make a general confession. The novice, seeing her preoccupied with this examen, and fearing this application would increase the disease, told her this review was quite useless. The humble Religious then said that her conscience reproached her with three sins that would be easy for her to confess. The first was that when she was thirteen years old she was quite satisfied when she heard herself praised for her piety, and that when she heard it repeated she remained longer in the chapel than usual; the second, that while she was a novice she had composed some poetry, and another person carried off her laurels by claiming it as her own, and that her sin lay in making known that the other one had told a lie; the third, that while the building was going on she weakly allowed some relatives of the Sisters to enter the house.

It is easy to find a parallel in the lives of the saints with this good Mother, seeing the faults they so often accused themselves of. They are an indubitable proof of the eminent sanctity to which this Religious constantly tended, and the wonderful effects of her persevering efforts.

After this confession Mother Mary Angelique felt perfectly calm. The thought of Holy Communion the following day filled her with holy joy; she said to her nurse: "I am rejoiced at what he said to me: 'We shall go into the house of the Lord.' If I could be cured the intense joy I feel would be capable of giving me back my health." The Mother Superior then told her to ask for her cure; she replied that she had no other desire except the accomplishment of the will of God, but if Mother ordered her to ask for her recovery she would have to pray at the same time that she would make better use of it.

A violent attack of apoplexy, a few days after, put her in immediate danger. She lost consciousness, and was anointed while in that state. The astonishment of the doctor was great when he found her recovered from this stroke. But this attack increased her suffering tenfold. It now was impossible for her to remain in bed; she passed the whole day in a chair; this was her only relief.

Her calmness and patience never forsook her. She wished to leave her novice-nurse a souvenir of the peace with which a Religious, who has always served God faithfully, can die. She had other attacks of apoplexy at intervals, and on March 16, 1698, her long and painful agony commenced. At her request the almoner read, at her bedside, the Passion, according to Saint John; he commenced it by the beautiful prayer of our Lord after the institution of the Holy Eucharist.

It was in these holy dispositions that she tranquilly rendered her soul to God.

After she expired the Reverend Almoner and the Community remained a long time beside her mortal remains without saying the usual prayers. They all felt more like thanking God for the graces He had given to this great soul than praying for her eternal repose. The priests who celebrated holy Mass for her assured them they had the same intense feeling. Her corpse became quite supple, and it was impossible to look upon those holy remains without being filled with respect and veneration.

Every one who had known her wanted some object that had been in her possession. But her love for poverty was so great that they could not find anything except her clothes, which they were obliged to cut up into little pieces, to satisfy their devotion. They opened a box she kept in her cell, hoping to find something there, but it contained only instruments of penance; they were numerous and varied. This innocent victim had made a vow, with the consent of her director, to wear some of them every day during the time of her superiority, and since habit could not sweeten their rigor she was obliged to change them frequently.

This discovery made a great impression on the Community, and on the Penitents. Those poor creatures persuaded themselves that their good Mother thus cruelly tortured herself to obtain their conversion; in gratitude they decided to work energetically to change their lives, in order to become worthy fruits of penitence. The devotedness that Mother Mary Angelique always testified for them became more accentuated and more fruitful after her death. Deprived of so precious an aid, Mother M. of Saint Julien occupied herself with the direction of the work of construction that was to make the monastery more regular and more commodious. She arranged some apartments, and fitted them up for the reception of lady boarders. We find there at that time Madame de la Margeliere and the Countess de Mornay, her daughter. Among the novices we find the widow of President du Lattey. Her dowry helped the Order to build, and merited for her the title of benefactress. She was professed under the name of Sister Mary Celeste Ebenard.

CHAPTER IV

SUPERIORITIES OF MOTHERS MARY SERAPHINE GARDIN, ANGELIQUE DE CARNE, ANNE ANGELIQUE DU BOUEXIC DE PINIEUX AND ANGELIQUE LE GRAS DE CHAROT—FIRE IN RENNES DURING THE SUPERIORITY OF MOTHER DE CARNE

It was Mother M. Seraphine Gardin that was elected in 1703. With her, we see arrive the first novices of the former Mothers. The zeal of Mother Gardin was shown by her faithful observance of all the Rules.

In 1709 Mother Angelique succeeded her. The little that the Annals tell us regarding this Religious suffices to prove that she was eminently qualified for this charge. The credit due to her birth was also very useful to the monastery, especially during the famine of 1709. M. Ferrand, the steward of the province, gave her large alms. In several cases the Divine protection was visible. The wall of the enclosure had been in a ruinous condition for a long time; it would have buried under its debris all the little boarders, if a torrential rain had not fallen some minutes before it tottered to the ground; on account of the heavy shower the children had run into the house, just in time to make their escape. A statue of the Blessed Virgin was found intact beneath the ruins. Mother de Carne, to testify her gratitude for the protection of the children, built a little chapel in honor of the Protectress.

This accident gives us an idea of the number of children they had there at that time; there were only twelve, but they belonged to the best families.

Another incident at that time was the miraculous escape of the convent from fire, as the Palace of de la Monnaie, quite near, was burned to the ground. At the moment of the greatest danger the steward, M. Ferrand, entered the house. It was the occasion of new and signal favors on his part, for having remarked the narrowness and small number of cells he ordered new constructions, the bills to be sent to him.

The Annals joyfully mention the passage of the Sisters of Guingamp on their trip to Tours for that foundation. The good Mother M. of Saint Julien, in particular, who had given the first Mothers of Guingamp, enjoyed very much the blessings of their enterprise.

Notwithstanding her eighty-three years she had all her faculties, and gave the Community an example of the most profound humility, and the most perfect regularity. In 1715 the Sisters placed her again at their head, for the seventh time. But three years later her infirmities did not permit her to resume this charge, and Mother M. Angelique de Carne was reelected in 1718.

All the triennials of this dear Mother were marked with very heavy crosses. Shortly after her election she saw the Community tried by a terrible epidemic, which seems to have been the cholera. The Mother Superior was herself stricken, and twenty-five Religious were attacked at the same time. The boarders and Penitents quitted the monastery. They did not find outside much more security; in effect, if the Annalist is a good authority, about twenty-five thousand persons were carried off by this scourge, in the diocese of Rennes alone.

The Sisters were just getting over the effects of this trial when Mother M. of the Heart of Jesus de la Greve and her companions arrived in the monastery on their way to Paris. The travelers had the consolation to learn that the Blessed Eudes had predicted this foundation, but he had announced at the same time that it would be accompanied with great crosses. The certainty of doing the will of God animated their courage, and sustained them later, when the trials that had been predicted came in full force.

On April 24, 1720, soon after the Sisters left for their new mission, Mother M. of Saint Julien Leblond slept sweetly in the Lord. To complete our little history of her we shall only say that during the last two years of her life she requested the favor of being employed as aid to the mistresses of the classes of the Penitents. Mother de Carne granted it to her, knowing well the great source of edification she would be to those dear souls, and the blessings her prayers would bring upon them.

Her death was preceded by an illness of five months, during which time the Sisters were the witnesses of her love, her recollection and of her humility. This venerated Mother begged the superioress, her former novice, to give her her blessing every evening; she received it with profound respect. She wished that she would often speak to her of God, and for making complaints, which her illness sometimes drew from her inadvertently, she frequently asked pardon. "It was thus," said the Annals, "that her good example supplied for the words of edification she might have said in her last moments." She was aged eighty-eight years and six months, and professed over sixty-seven years.

The greatest trial during the government of Mother de Carne was the terrible fire that nearly destroyed the whole city of Rennes.

"On December 23, 1720," the Annals tells us, "fire broke out in a quarter of the city far enough away from the monastery. To come to the aid of the poor sufferers from the fire the Sisters kept their doors opened and took in such movables as they wished to confide to them; and so it was from Sunday night until Wednesday. On the latter day the monastery was threatened. Nothing could stop the conflagration. The Sisters then began to think of placing in security what they considered the most precious, but the confusion incident to those persons who came to remove their furniture and other things they had placed there out of reach of the fire was the cause why a part of their own articles was either broken or lost.

"Meantime, a mournful silence reigned in the city. Thirty-two streets on fire presented a frightful spectacle. The discouraged and terrified population saw the uselessness of their efforts, and were undecided whether it were not better to abandon everything to the flames. The Sisters, exhausted themselves, expected the destruction of their dear convent. On Wednesday Right Reverend M. Turpin de Crisse de Sansay, Bishop of Rennes, sent them permission to go back to their families. Seeing that the Sisters did not profit by this permission, and exposed their lives to save their monastery, his Lordship went there on Thursday evening and obliged a great number of them to go to some other Communities in the city. Mother de Carne replied to his Lordship with respectful courage and energy, that while she could find an unburned spot to place her feet she would not abandon her monastery. Several Sisters imitated her courageous example.

"This generous resolution saved the house. Had they abandoned it, those who were fighting the fire would have destroyed the convent in trying to help abate the flames. Excited, on the contrary, by the unshakable firmness of the Religious the workers showed greater alacrity, and during Thursday night and Friday succeeded, despite all expectations, in overcoming that fiery element.

"This success was attributed less to their persevering labors than to a miraculous escape, due to the Divine intervention in favor of the monastery. Several persons of known veracity assured the Sisters of having seen in the midst of the flames a Religious of the Institute, who forced the flames to respect the monastery. Sister M. of the Angels Chevier, on the second day of the conflagration, had put the portrait of Sister Mary Desvallees on the top of the belfry, and when the two neighboring houses took fire, the flames leaped up to the belfry, but were visibly repulsed. This fact was observed by the Capuchin and Jacobin Fathers, by the Sisters, and by every one that was helping to stem the tide of that fiery element. In relating those circumstances the different witnesses stated that it was an evident miracle."

It was to this terrible catastrophe that Rennes owes the destruction of nearly all of its historic monuments, and its present modern form of buildings. The vows of Mother de Carne had been accepted; the greater part of the monastery was saved. But important repairs were indispensable, and nearly all their furniture, as well as their provisions, had disappeared. Bishop de Sansay and the steward gave the Sisters fifteen hundred francs from the alms sent from the Court. The King gave them also twelve acres of wood from the forest of Rennes, to help them in rebuilding their convent. Different persons gave them alms, and finally, all the houses of the Order rendered aid as far as their resources would permit. It took a long time before the poor people could shake off the effects of this awful catastrophe. Nothing proved this better than the impossibility of utilizing for many years the lumber given them by the King.

In 1724 Mother M. Anne Eugenia du Bouexic de Pinieux was elected for the first time. She was related to Mother de Carne, who was also her godmother. She was educated by her aunts, who were Religious of the Royal Abbey of Saint Sulpice. From her early years God seemed to be whispering His *Veni* in her ears. She certainly felt that the religious life was the only life for her. The holiness of her godmother made her choose the Order of Our Lady of Charity. Victorious over the resistance of her family, she entered that convent in her eighteenth year. Her profession took place on January 29, 1709, feast of Saint Francis de Sales, whose meekness she tried to imitate, as also his charity and benevolence to the neighbor.

At the moment of her election, while the Sisters were testifying their joy, her sorrow was so great that soon after she fell grievously ill, and was compelled to remain in the infirmary. When her strength returned sufficiently to enable her to rise the humble Religious begged the Father Superior of the monastery to come to the parlor, without giving him any idea what was the nature of her request. Supported by the infirmarians she went to see him, and casting herself on her knees she besought him to depose her, acknowledging herself incapable of governing, on account of her poor health, and especially of her lack of virtue.

The Father Superior, appreciating her merit at its true value, spoke a few words of encouragement to her, and declared he found her more capable of governing from her bed than many others who were in the enjoyment of good health. Mother Mary Anne left the parlor like a criminal whose appeal for pardon had been refused.

At the time of her reelection her entreaties, joined to those of her mother, had obtained from the Bishop of Rennes the assurance that her name would not be placed on the catalogue. Mother M. Angelique de Carne, in the name of several of the oldest Religious, respectfully demanded the motive for which his Lordship judged it necessary thus to limit the liberty of their elections, and made him understand that the virtues of Mother du Bouexic made her more worthy of governing than any one else. These representations were carried to Bishop de Breteuil, who gracefully yielded, and Mother Mary Anne was reelected.

Shortly after she had the sorrow to lose Mother M. Angelique de Carne, whose affection and singular enlightenment sustained and encouraged her so much. These two great souls were more united by the bonds of virtue than by those of blood. Nothing ever marred their union.

History has not handed anything down to us regarding the governments of Mothers M. of Saint Julien Pechard (1730) and M. of Saint Rose Menissier de Launay (1737-1743-1749-1752). The last named was sent with Mother Angelique Gardin to the Assembly of Caen in 1734.

Mother du Bouexic, being often ill at that time, found it impossible to undertake the journey. Notwithstanding the infirmities of this good Mother the Community always placed her at its head when the Rule permitted. At the time of her deposition, after her seventh triennial, she fondly hoped that her health would prevent her from being reelected. Her hopes were not realized. Bending again under the burden, she said: "I ought not to have expected it," and received with simplicity the tokens of affection from the Sisters.

Having returned to the infirmary she found a crown of flowers that the infirmarian had laid on her bed. She took up the flowers and, going on her knees, recited the *Miserere*, with her arms in a cross, interrupting it several times with her sighs and tears. The Sister infirmarian thought for the moment that she got suddenly worse, and asked how she felt. The good Mother replied: "I suffer because I am not in a state of health which would allow me to help the Sisters, who have a right to expect it from me. I have begged of them so frequently not to think of me, and I did this with the greatest sincerity; I only told them the truth, that I am not capable of doing anything."

To console her the infirmarian told her that the Sisters would do all in their power to help her bear her burden, and that if it were necessary one would be able to fulfill four charges in order to help out. Mother du Bouexic replied: "I am well persuaded of the virtue of our Sisters, and of their indulgence. I have had many proofs of both; indeed, they carry more than half the burden. But before God, on me the account shall rest."

In reality, her sufferings only increased. Soon she was attacked with apoplexy, and one year later, on June 22, 1756, the Sisters had the sorrow of losing her. She governed twenty-two years.

After the death of Mother du Bouexic, the Sisters chose Mother M. Angelique le Gras de Charot. This Mother was born in 1692. She was at the time of her election sixty-four years old. While very young she manifested the desire to consecrate herself to God; but her entrance into the novitiate was delayed by order of the Bishop of Rennes. About the year 1708, Right Reverend M. de Lavardin found the Community too numerous for their resources, and forbade them to receive any novices. This obstacle was removed the year following, and Mlle. le Gras made her novitiate, and was professed. After the fire in Rennes her ability for the pharmacy made her a great resource for the Community, and in times of extreme poverty she showed her adaptability in economizing in important matters. This employment furnished her with many occasions of exercising charity towards the neighbor. This virtue shone more brilliantly when her superiors confided to her the charge of econome, and later on the care of the Penitents. In the year 1740 they were extremely hard to manage, for nearly all had been enclosed against their will. The kindness of Mother M. Angelique made it very repugnant to her to exercise the firmness necessary under such circumstances; but her zeal obliged her to do violence to her natural inclination, and she acquitted herself deftly of this employment.

At the time of the reelection of Mother de Charot the Community, according to a circular, was composed only of twenty-eight Religious of the choir, of whom some were infirm. Several died during her superiority, and the Annals tell us that one of them, Sister M. of Saint Charles Poulain de Maulny, had been for thirteen years, like the holy man Job, stricken with a cruel leprosy from the sole of her foot to the crown of her head.

The monastery was severely tried. Different accidents happened during the repairs that were being made, and put the life of some of the Sisters in serious danger. The Penitents made every effort to escape. The police had to interfere with great rigor, in order to shelter the Sisters from the stones and other missiles that were thrown at them over the garden wall.

But during the Jubilee of 1760 a great consolation was granted to the Sisters, that of seeing their Penitents profiting by this grace. The exercises were preached by Reverend P. le Fevre, Superior-General of the Eudists. The Annals eulogize this Father, and state that he rendered the Community the most signal services. At the time of his death in 1775 they renewed this testimonial.

After her deposition Mother M. Angelique went back to the common life with the greatest pleasure. She then exercised the charges of econome and refectorian. Then her great age and blindness forced her to complete inaction. It is hard to imagine her in such a sad situation; her virtue supported all patiently. In the midst of those trials she showed only one disquietude, that of not being able to assist at holy Mass. God granted her the grace of being able to assist at it on the last Sunday of her life. During the day she frequently repeated: "I had the happiness of hearing holy Mass." That same evening she was in danger of death, and being unconscious she was not able to confess. Later it was possible for her to receive the holy Sacraments.

Mother M. Angelique le Gras de Charot died a holy death on August 13, 1779, after spending seventy years in the religious life. Few of the Sisters, if any, bore the yoke of the Lord in the Order of Our Lady of Charity so long. She made her novitiate under Mother M. of Saint Julien Leblond. With her disappeared the last witness of the virtues of the first Mothers of the monastery. We may remark on the frequency of the name of Mary Angelique among those Sisters. That can be explained on account of the respect conserved for the memory of Mother de Balde, who was the first that bore that name.

CHAPTER V

SUPERIORITY OF MOTHERS M. OF SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER ESPERT, MARY ANNE EMILIE PICAUD DE LA POMMERAYE, MARY HENRIETTA ROBINAULT DE BOIS-BASSET AND MARY OF SAINT AUGUSTINE DE MARCORELLES—DESTRUCTION OF THE MONASTERY

THE life of Mother M. of Saint Francis Xavier Espert, who succeeded to the office in 1762, is well known to us. We find while reading it that she possessed all the virtues that ought to adorn the daughters of the Blessed Eudes. M. Espert enjoyed a fine employment in the Court of Exchequer and, consequently, was quite wealthy, which fortune he acquired by his severe probity. He and his wife were determined to give a solid education to their four children. Mlle. Espert was placed with her two younger sisters in the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity. At that time Mlle. Espert was eleven years old. On account of her precocious mind, and her serious piety, this wise little one was admitted to some of the instructions given in the novitiate, and far from jesting about what she saw and heard she applied herself to profit of those instructions, especially as she was preparing for her First Communion. She brought to this great action an intensity of thought and love that was wonderful in one of her age.

Her education finished, her parents brought her home, where works of mercy became her favorite occupation. Notwithstanding her frail health she visited the hospitals and, perhaps, would have consecrated herself to the service of the poor in the Hotel-Dieu had her father not interfered. However, an agreeable journey, made with the intention of distracting her from her incipient desires of the religious life, served its purpose in a way, but did not entirely obliterate her desire, nor did she neglect any of her spiritual duties. Divine Providence took care to keep it fresh in her memory; she ran very serious danger while on sea. In the midst of the peril she promised Saint Francis Xavier to take his name if she had a true vocation to the religious life.

Mlle. Espert returned to her paternal home, but immediately requested to enter a convent, but her father was very loath in giving her up, as she was very useful to him in all his affairs, and opposed her as much as he could conscientiously do, as he was a very good Christian man. Finally, when she was nineteen years old, she obtained his consent, and entered the monastery under the auspices of the Blessed Virgin, on the feast of her Immaculate Conception.

Mother M. Eugenia du Bouexic was at that time superior. This Mother quickly perceived the qualifications of her novice, and attached her to herself in a very particular manner; she served her as infirmarian, and sure of her discretion, confided to her the most important affairs. The young Sister M. of Saint Francis Xavier bestowed much care to this good Mother, and her devotedness never diminished during the long years she took care of her. Night and day were alike to her; her activities were tireless.

One day, when she was very ill, Mother M. Eugenia asked the novice if she would die did she think it would shake her vocation. The generous novice presently replied: "Mother, I love you very tenderly, but I did not come to religion for you, and in losing you I would not wish to lose God, for Whose sake I came to the convent."

Her fervor never decreased after her profession, and God blessed the zeal with which she acquitted herself of all her employments. Under the many superiorities of Mother du Bouexic Sister M. of Saint Francis always made use of her influence in the interests of peace. When some report was made that was disadvantageous to a Sister she would tell this good Mother to wait a proper time to give a correction. "No one should speak when there is any anger in one's heart," she would say; "there may be some exaggeration; wait and listen to the party accused." She always wished to justify the two parties, her charity was so whole-souled.

After the death of Mother M. Eugenia Sister M. of Saint Francis was not disturbed. As sacristan she occupied herself with her funeral; then submitted herself with simplicity to the new superioress, without appearing to notice any difference.

These virtues, united to so many other qualities, placed her at the head of the Community in 1762. Her superiority was remarkable for the sweetness and affability, mixed with firmness, with which she guided the Sisters. The sick especially felt her loving kindness. One Lay-Sister showed some desire to eat a certain fruit, hoping that it would do her good. The Mother instantly sent some one out to buy it. It was a fruit that was not then in season, and consequently it was high-priced; the infirmarian made this observation to her; the Mother replied: "That does not matter; the price should not cause any difficulty about getting it. If it can be had, get it; we shall pay for it. If there is not money enough in the house we ought to deprive ourselves of something that is necessary for ourselves to satisfy our sick Sisters. We should never make such an objection."

This conduct had for its principle a great confidence in God. Very often, when poverty made itself felt, Mother M. of Saint Francis would say: "Has God ever failed us yet? Let us hope, then, that no one will be disheartened." This virtue was very necessary for her, in the midst of the difficulties arising from urgent repairs they were obliged to make, and the excessive prices they had to pay for provisions. It was so hard to meet demands that they were obliged to raise the board of the pupils. In all these occasions Providence came to her aid; so marked was this that one lady said: "It is sufficient that Mother Saint Francis desires a thing and she gets it."

The monastery, like all the others of the Order, had at that time lady boarders. It was a means of exercising charity and procuring resources. It was in regard to those ladies that Mother Espert showed her firmness, in obliging them to conform themselves to the usages of the house; she never permitted them, except for some good reason, to do what she had once forbidden them. In this way assistance at daily Mass and the Offices on Sunday became obligatory on all those ladies. If some one failed to be there Mother Espert immediately went to her chamber and would, with a touch of irony in her speech, ask if she wanted the doctor to be called. After staying away from High Mass, if one of them asked to go out, Mother Superior would answer unhesitatingly: "Oh, no; you are too ill to go out walking." Consequently, there was no reason they could advance to make her recall her refusal.

Her inflexibility was as great for those who wanted permission to go to soirees or to the theater. Ladies could not return under three months if guilty of this infraction of rule. Mother Espert resisted the wishes of a Vicar-General who begged this favor for a boarder. A niece of this firm superior assisted at a comedy. The silence that she kept for a long time concerning her disobedience saved her from being sent away. When her aunt heard about it long after she severely reproached her, and added: "It is well for you that I was ignorant of your conduct, for you would have slept that evening with our Touriere Sisters; and the next day you would have been sent home to your mother. You would never have been received here again while I was in charge."

Her vigilance took note, also, of the sort of books that were received into the house. Romances were quickly discovered, seized and destroyed. The severe reprimand that accompanied these seizures inspired a salutary fear, and hindered more books of the kind being introduced.

The zeal Mother Espert exercised to the best account, and with the most fruit was in regard to the Penitents. She felt immense satisfaction when the class was quite filled. A novice was sorely afflicted at seeing they were not all converted. The Mother said to her: "Oh, my Sister, if, as we trust, we have, by our vigilance and care, the happiness of preventing them from offending God while they are under our care, it would be sufficient to give us joy in working for their salvation." If some of them were hard to manage, even vicious, and the Sisters complained, the good Mother was not terrified, but excused them as much as possible, and said to them: "I am sure that it is through ignorance and their early training, as well as on account of the bad example they saw around them. Let us hope they will change."

As charity and the order of the house demanded, the Sisters were the first objects of her solicitude. It was very easy for the Sisters to expose their needs to her, she was always so amiable. Sometimes she would say, when she saw that a Sister was suffering: "My dear Sister, why did you not speak sooner?" In this way her affable manner neutralized her natural gravity, which would easily have become imposing. She had the rare talent of making herself feared and loved; among the Sisters, especially, attachment prevailed over every other consideration.

The great consolation of Mother Espert during the first six years of her government was the giving of the habit to eleven novices, ten of whom she admitted to profession. These new Religious were very essential to the Community, as a great number of the Sisters were advanced in years.

Mother M. Anne Emilie Picaud de la Pommeraye was elected in 1768. She belonged to a family of saints. M. de la Pommeraye recited the Breviary every day, and every Friday he fasted on bread and water. One of his sons became a priest, and later a canon of the Cathedral; his zeal and devotedness were mostly exercised among those criminals condemned to death. The direction of pious souls was also one of his favorite occupations. He died in the odor of sanctity. Two of the daughters of M. de la Pommeraye became Ursuline Religious, two others entered the Order of Our Lady of Charity. Sister M. Anne Emilie owed her vocation in a great measure to her brother, the canon. He had prescribed several practices in honor of the Word Incarnate, and his holy Mother, to this young sister, and when she would finish her devotions he would tell her to add: "My God, give me, I pray Thee, a religious vocation. I wish for it so much. Oh, give it to me!" Her prayer was heard. It would be well for other souls to make this prayer. But too often some unworthy prejudice and gross error make people think that this grace cannot be granted; the vocation, they think, ought to come of itself, without any concurrence on our part.

It was, however, not until she was twenty-five years old that Mlle. de la Pommeraye entered the convent. Her progress in the religious virtues was exceedingly rapid, for her application in overcoming herself was heroic. Consequently, she acquired a remarkable degree of sanctity. Her humility made her the admiration of the Sisters, and it was the result of victory over her naturally haughty and proud disposition.

The charges she exercised in the convent after her profession make her known to us as one wonderfully qualified for the guidance of the Penitents. She was charged eight years with their direction. Her tenderness for those poor souls made them look upon her as a real mother. She foresaw all their needs, took care of their poor belongings, notwithstanding the repulsion she had for this work. If obedience had not interposed she would have despoiled herself of some of her own clothing to protect those dear children against the cold of the winter season.

Her charity was exercised particularly towards the sick and suffering. One of the Penitents had had a long illness; after she recovered she was covered with horrible sores. Sister M. Anne washed her, herself. To spare the companions of this poor girl the necessity of sleeping near her this compassionate mistress put her in a chamber adjoining her own, and every night she would rise to minister to her needs. This sacrifice was great; being herself subject to excessive headaches, she stood in need of prolonged sleep. Several Penitents died, assisted by her constant charity.

Sister Mary Anne loved to have zealous preachers give retreats to the Penitents. One of them having been converted in a startling manner her good mistress did not know how to express her happiness sufficiently. She said to her: "Ah, my dear child, what shall I not do to thank God for the pleasure your conversion has procured me! I would have bought it with my blood."

Her rare good sense made her see when they should be corrected and how. Her kindness was inclined to be sometimes excessive. They remarked it themselves. One of them said: "You treat such a one with kindness, when it might be more to the purpose to punish her." However, results proved that her conduct in this line was not weakness, but rather the result of prudence and ability.

These same qualities were cherished by the Community during her superiority. But her courage was put frequently to severe tests. The novices were all ailing, and the poverty of the monastery was extreme. Flour was very dear, and of bad quality. The bread they made of it was not eatable; it engendered a host of diseases. The Annals tell us that one saw in the house only confessors, doctors and apothecaries. Two young Sisters, on whom they reposed the brightest hopes, died. The Mother was herself in danger. To cap the climax some skilful thieves robbed the econome, thus despoiling the Community of the little they had.

In 1773 Monsignor de Girac, after having made his visits to the parishes of the town, made them also to the Communities. He went several times to the monastery; when he brought his visit to a close his Lordship said to the Sisters:

Yes, my very dear Sisters, I feel obliged to tell you in all sincerity and heartfelt joy that I am very edified at finding your monastery in such great fervor, especially since it has been so long since you have had a visit before. I am certainly full of deep admiration. What surprises and charms me the most is that you are able to keep yourselves so perfectly unconnected, and hold yourselves in that proper dignity that preserves you from being intimate with those secular persons with which your house is filled. We must bless God for this, and always avoid what could bring any dissipation into your midst. You must edify those persons by your regularity, and act in their regard with the greatest politeness when your employment demands that you have any relations with them; thus, by honoring God and holy religion, you will procure good subjects for your house.

The prelate said he was very happy to be thus acquainted with them, and assured them of his benevolence. On that day he also gave Confirmation to the boarders and Penitents, and testified to the mistresses the satisfaction he felt at the good behavior of all of them. Monsignor Bareau de Girac was the last Bishop of Rennes before the Revolution. He died in 1820, canon of Saint Denis.

The poverty of the house made him prohibit the Order from receiving candidates without dowry; this was most regrettable. The dearth of subjects became greater, and necessarily it was impossible to fill the charges. A little more confidence in God would have been more profitable to the monastery.

Friday, May 21, 1773, was the one hundredth year since the arrival in Rennes of Sisters M. of Saint Julien Leblond and Mary Angelique de Balde. That day was then chosen for the centennial of the foundation. The Religious prepared themselves for it by three days' retreat, as for the solemn feasts. Bishop de Girac granted the "Adoration of the Forty Hours" for the Triduum. On the first day the Offices were celebrated by the Cathedral Chapter, the second day by the clergy of Saint Etienne's parish. The third day the Eudist Fathers celebrated with their pupils of the Grand Seminary and those of the Little Seminary. The chapel had been repainted for the occasion. It was beautifully and tastefully decorated. All the Offices were sung with organ accompaniment. The next day a requiem Mass was chanted for all the deceased Sisters and benefactors.

To bring to a close the facts relative to the first superiority of Mother Picaud we shall take the edifying death of a Penitent. She was placed by compulsion in the monastery, and, of course, eagerly awaited the hour of her freedom. Once back in her old quarters, the midst of the world, she saw that her salvation was in danger, and humbly requested to be taken back. From that date her life may be said to have been one continued act of self-renunciation, always holily employed, and penetrated with the fear of death and judgment she resisted for long years her many and sometimes violent temptations. Towards the end of her life she suffered much from asthma. On Palm Sunday, 1773, she fell greviously ill, and was obliged to take to her bed. The Sisters thought it was an ordinary attack, but she assured them to the contrary, saying: "I hope that God will grant me the grace that I have so often demanded of Him, that is, to die on Good Friday." She repeated these words to every one that came to visit her.

However, they gave no credence to her prophecy, but soon opened their eyes to its truth when they saw that the fever would not abate nor yield to any remedy; this caused them to fear lest her saying was true; they proposed to have her receive the Last Sacraments, which she received with the greatest fervor. On Good Friday she seemed to be better and brighter, but she still continued to say that it was to be her last one on earth. About two o'clock she grew worse all at once, and some hours later her prophecy was realized. Her death was that of the predestined.

About the same time the Annals recount the death of the holy priest M. Boursoul, whom the Sisters regarded as their benefactor, on account of the signal services he rendered to the monastery. The devotedness of this good priest for the work of sanctification does not permit us to contest this assertion. Through love for the poor he solicited the favor of being almoner to the Hospital of Saint Yves. On Monday in Easter week, April 4th, after having passed long hours in the tribunal of penance, he had a conference with the ecclesiastics attached to the hospital, and he there recalled that forty-five years before he had commenced his preaching in the parish church of All Saints, where he was preaching that evening.

Before going to the church this good priest fervently prayed in his room for light and guidance. He mounted the pulpit, and during three hours preached on the glory and happiness of the saints. His gestures were vigorous, and he displayed the fire of youth; his voice was unwontedly brilliant and strong, his gestures, as we have said, vigorous and vehement so as to enforce the truth of what he said and to emphasize it on his hearers. Towards the end of the first point, after a lively and touching description of Paradise and the joys of the blessed, he cried out: "No, my brethren, never will it be given to the feeble eyes of man to support here below the brilliancy of the Divine Majesty; it is necessary that we be in heaven when we see Him face to face and without a veil: *Videbimus eum sicuti est.*" Finishing these words, and sinking back in the pulpit, he expired, with his eyes fixed on heaven. When the silence continued the large audience became spell-bound; it simply felt he was dead; one person cried out: "He spoke of heaven; he has gone there." This same judgment is also that of the historian, for this great servant of God left an incontestable reputation for sanctity.

In 1774 Mother de la Pommeraye was deposed. She retired to the ranks of common life, and her submission was most edifying; she just resumed the life of humility she led before her election. Her only fear was that she might be the cause of sorrow to any one; if trouble occurred, she could find no rest until it was settled. She was charged for a long time with the office of portress. This was a particularly troublesome charge in Rennes on account of the numerous lady boarders that lived in the house. Sweetly obliging, she edified every one with whom she had any dealings. In 1779 Sister M. of Saint Reine died. This respected Religious had been formed, during her novitiate, by Mother M. of Saint Julien Leblond. She was a faithful witness of the first traditions of the monastery. Mother M. Eugenia Emilia survived her five years. The last year of her life was a long martyrdom, which she bore with angelic patience. She passed to a better life on September 9, 1784.

Mother M. of Saint Francis Xavier Espert took up again the reins of government in the year 1774. Her superiority was saddened by the death of several Sisters. The Annals reproduce the abridged lives of Sisters M. of Saint Joseph Lefragoul, Prudence Thomas, Saint Dosithe Guerinet, Saint

Celinie Pajot de Lafond, Saint Angelique le Gras Charot, and Saint Reine Picaud de la Pommeraye. The reading of them proves how deep was the seed of holy religion and how abundant was the harvest in that Community so impoverished in regard to earthly goods. Those vacancies were felt all the more keenly since the prohibition of the Bishop had been issued, as, of course, that hindered them from receiving any novices. The good Mother Superior was obliged to multiply her own charges, in order to be able to provide for the different places in need of Sisters.

A circular, dated 1775, says that there were at that time about one hundred and forty persons in the house, about thirty of whom were lady boarders, and expected they would be properly served, which they were. The following year the absence of the enclosure, caused by the falling of the wall, was the cause of several Penitents leaving them. This time it was in reality French leave. There remained only about twenty-five. Nearly all these had entered of their own free will. We now approach the Revolution, and the time when the Royal decree went forth, which effected all the houses that kept Penitents. Perhaps the spirit of the Revolution had already made itself felt in the House of Rennes. This city, with its Jansenistic and Voltarian Parliament, was one of the chief theaters of its mad excesses.

The falling of the wall, besides other troubles to the Sisters caused by it, was an occasion of much expense. Knowing of the extreme poverty of the House of Rennes, the Monastery of Caen generously sent them a thousand francs. Right Reverend M. de Girac also promised to aid the Sisters. At that time the episcopal palace was near the convent. But shortly after he went to reside in the Abbatial Palace of Saint Melanie and forgot his promises. This change of clerical residences deprived the Sisters of the spiritual aid that the Vicar-General, Reverend M. le Mintier, had been giving them. During several years this priest used to say Mass at the hour the Sisters wished it said, in order to oblige the Community, and he did not even wish them to testify any gratitude for this favor. We shall return to this in our history of Guingamp, for he was the first Bishop of Treguier.

Several deaths occurred in the boarding establishments, in the class of Penitents and in the Community, which saddened the close of the superiority of Mother Espert. She had the consolation of rebuilding the wall, and a little chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin.

A short time after her deposition an accident, which at first seemed unimportant, caused a cerebral lesion. From that time she no longer enjoyed the use of her reason. But even in that sad condition her good habits did not forsake her, and she made many acts of virtue. She died in 1788 without recovering her reason.

She had been replaced in 1780 by Mother M. Henrietta Robinault de Bois-Basset. This Sister, after having finished her education in the Royal House of Saint Cyr, went back to her family. Later she decided to enter a religious Community, after making a mission given in the parish. Without saying anything of her intention she requested her entrance in the Charity as a lady boarder, in order to study closely the Institute, and see if it would be possible for her to embrace life in the convent. The evening previous to her entrance into the novitiate she assisted at a little entertainment that was given by the lady boarders. They were intensely surprised next day to hear of her resolve to leave them.

Her religious life shows us how courageous she was in overcoming herself on every occasion. A deep-seated repugnance for teaching prevented her from entering Saint Cyr, where she had been educated; once entered into the Order of Our Lady of Charity, she was occupied in the direction of the boarders, and succeeded beyond her fondest dreams. The weakness of her health, and her natural timidity, rendered teaching painful, but she overcame all; she was gifted with a beautiful voice, and to render service to the Community she directed the choir almost constantly. On the eve of her death she had given a lesson in singing to the young Religious.

Although she was Assistant at the time of her election, the choice of the Sisters surprised and afflicted her so much that for a long time she was inconsolable. A circular, dated 1781, expresses it in these terms:

> Our joy was turned into sorrow fearing that it would undermine her health. Even to the present it required all her virtue and all her strength of mind to submit to the trial, and bend her shoulders to the burden. If we were not writing to our good and indulgent Sisters we would not dare to acknowl-

edge the sorrow that it is to our superiors to charge themselves with our guidance, but we feel sure that your charities will thereby judge of the humility of our Mothers, by hearing of the repugnance they felt on receiving the marks of respect prescribed by our Rules, their fear of not making their daughters happy; these and many other reasons are the causes why they do not wish to accept the task of the government of the monasteries.

During the first years of her government death struck cruel blows to that Community, already so few in number, and handicapped it by having only old and infirm Sisters to see to the charges. The illness of the Sister econome increased the embarrassment of the Mother Superior. To make matters worse, it became necessary to undertake the laborious and expensive work on the city walls, on which the principal body of their own buildings was laid. Bishop de Girac and some other benefactors happily came to their aid.

Mother M. Henrietta courageously supported these trials, but she easily succumbed to sorrow by the knowledge she had, even the certitude, that a sacrilege had been committed in the house, although she knew that the Community was a stranger to the crime. A violent fever set in, and in a few hours her life was in danger; however, the ardent prayers of the Sisters were heard, and she recovered.

After her deposition in 1786 this good Mother was very weak and languid. Pulmonary consumption, of which she had always borne the germ, declared itself, and in a violent form. Courageous and energetic, she continued to fulfill her charge as directress of the novitiate that obedience had imposed upon her. We can truly say that she died in the exercise of her functions, even going to Mass of the Community, on June 11, 1788; she was only fifty years old.

Mother M. of Saint Augustine succeeded her in 1786. She had the sad consolation of receiving the last professions in the ancient Monastery of Rennes. Among those young Sisters we find the niece of the two former superiors, Sister M. of Saint Louis de Gonzaga Robinault du Plessis. By her mediation a retreat was provided for the Penitents which produced great fruit. At the approach of the Revolution those retreats were most useful. Mother de Marcorelles was continued in charge in 1789. She conducted her daughters during the hard times they were going through. The details regarding the persecutions of the Community are here quite defective. However, by reading those the other Communities passed through we can form a general idea.

The expulsion of the Community took place in 1792. It was then composed of twenty-six Religious of the choir, eight Lay-Sisters and two Touriere Sisters. All of them energetically refused to take the oath that was demanded of them. The Sisters appear to have taken no precaution to save even a part of their furniture. Their almoner had to take flight, so at the end it was very difficult for them to procure the succors of religion. An opening was made in a neighboring house, and occasionally a priest came there to say Mass. A pile of fagots hid the opening by which the Sisters confessed and communicated.

On the day arranged for their dispersion Mother M. of Saint Augustine brought the Sisters into the church, and told them that at such a moment it was only right and proper that the spouses of Jesus Christ would be found in His temple. It was there the revolutionary constables found them. The Sisters left, clothed in their religious habit. In their conciseness, the details conserved in the Annals help us to form in our mind a truly noble and beautiful scene, worthy of the first Christians. Those who executed this impious work had to feel, at least involuntarily, a respectful surprise on seeing those Religious filing out before them, covered with their long white mantles, calm and submissive in the midst of their trials, placing all their confidence in Him for Whom they suffered.

In the hope of a reunion, which did not take place until twenty-nine years later, the Sisters courageously wore their white habits for some months, although dispersed through the country. The most obliging offers were made to Mother M. of Saint Augustine, whose merit and virtue were well known in the highest society. One lady, in whose house she lived for some days, placed herself on her knees before her when the Mother first entered and presented her with the keys of the house, and humbly requested her to take up the direction of it. But this venerable Religious, faithful to her duty, wished to give a portion of her present lodging to her Sisters, charging herself especially with the younger Religious, whose age exposed them the more. Mlle. Espert, who had lived in the monastery for a long time, also took some of them in her house. Sister M. of Saint Eugenia Hillard d'Auberteuil took care of the sick and infirm; the others retired to their families. The Mother Superior kept up constant correspondence with all her Religious, assisting them at least with her counsels, and animating them to keep up as much as possible the practices of the religious life. Thus all lived in the world in a manner worthy of their holy vocation. Some of them lived in their little households as interior a life as if they were in their cloister; others sought to find how best they could exercise their zeal and charity. All lived by the labor of their hands.

When the revolutionary tempest began to abate somewhat, Mother M. of Saint Augustine strove valiantly to gather together the remainder of her dispersed flock. Shackled in her efforts, her perseverance would have triumphed over obstacles, only she was stricken with apoplexy towards the end of the year 1801. After an agony of nine days she died on Christmas Eve. Nothing could have been worse for the Sisters, apparently. This death deprived them of their head, and retarded in great measure the reconstruction of the monastery. However, it was not doomed to perish. Rennes has always profited by the labors of the children of the Blessed Eudes. It was in that city that his Congregation was reconstituted in 1826. Later, as we shall see, this poor Monastery of Our Lady of Charity, transported to a larger and better location, developed to splendid proportions, and became one of the most flourishing houses of the Order.

THIRD MONASTERY—HENNEBONT

1676--1687

THE ONLY CHAPTER

THE FOUNDATION AND DESTRUCTION OF THE MONASTERY

THE Order of Our Lady of Charity had not yet accepted the house of Rennes, yet Mother M. of the Trinity had supernatural views concerning those two foundations. This remarkable Religious exercised a great influence, as we have said, on the ladies who occupied the highest position in society. She understood how to gain them to God and excite in them an ardent zeal for the salvation of souls. Among those that frequented the convent parlors the most, we find Madame de Brie, wife of the President of Parliament of Brittany, and Mme. the Vicountess of Arcis. One day while speaking with these ladies, turning to the Vicountess of Arcis, Mother Heurtant announced the foundation of Guingamp. This lady, who had never even given it a thought, and who did not see any way open for the realization of this project, asked her how did she know this—on what did she count. "On the Will of God," replied Mother M. of the Trinity, "Who wishes that this house be founded; you, yourself, will do a part of it." She continued to instruct her by showing her the picture of a lady of Guingamp who was to be the foundress. In this portrait, Mme. des Arcis recognized Madame de Kervigan, her mother-in-law, whom Mother M. of the Trinity had never seen. The land on which the future monastery was to be built was exactly shown to her, and she gave her a minute description of it.

She predicted to Mme. de Brie that she would found a house of the Order at Hennebont, and said to her: "You will fight this inspiration for a long time, but when you have made the sacrifice of your goods to God He will permit robbers to carry away more than half of the booty." Madame de Brie had never communicated her project to any person, so she was greatly astonished. This prophecy was completely realized.

After the Sisters came there from Caen and took up the government of the house these same ladies came to see this good Mother on the vigil of the feast of the Holy Trinity, doubtless to wish her a happy feast. Mother Heurtant was at meditation, all filled with the love of God; she said to them at first: "Well, ladies, are you ready to do the Will of God?" On their response in the affirmative she spoke to them in a sublime manner on the immensity of the grace that God gives to those who associate with Him in the salvation of souls. What Mme. des Arcis could relate of that wholly inspirational conversation to her mother-in-law she did, and it decided her to found the Monastery of Guingamp, after her only daughter had been married to M. de Lasse.

As to Mme. de Brie, she signed the contract for the foundation of Hennebont, and at the same time made a gift to the Monastery of Guingamp of fifteen livres and eighty-six bushels of rye.

In her contract for Hennebont Mme. de Brie said that, being witness to the great fruit produced in souls by the Religious of Our Lady of Charity in the city of Rennes, she wished to procure the same advantages for her native city of Hennebont. For this purpose she gave her house, situated in the midst of the city, and the revenues of a farm that was not far distant. The Religious of Rennes accepted the foundation in the name of the future monastery. But as they had only lately sent the Sisters to Guingamp they addressed themselves to Caen, to give them subjects necessary for the new establishment.

Mother M. of the Nativity Herson was named superioress. Did she not, perhaps, understand the necessity of haste in this matter, and that there are occasions when we must take by stealth for fear of failure? Or was she, perhaps, hindered by losses that the House of Caen had during those years? However, it is true that it was only the year after that they responded to the eager request of Mother M. of the Trinity. This delay was very prejudicial to the new house, for, in the interval, Mme. de Brie died, and her heirs, most of them being

Protestants, contested the contract of foundation, and thus realized the prophecy made to her relation some time previous; they carried away all the goods that had been left. This loss, joined to the expense of a long drawn-out process, cost more than 60,000 livres. The annoying part of this lawsuit was the uncertainty of it. During the space of nine years the Sisters were in continual fear of seeing themselves thrown out on the street at the moment when they would least expect it. This shaky condition of affairs made them lose several excellent vocations.

The Sisters designated for the new house were Mary of the Conception le Lieupaul, M. of Saint Margaret Daisy and M. of the Purification Tison.

Of a most honorable family, but one that had fallen into poverty, Sister M. of the Conception had lived a life of sacrifice in the world until the age of thirty-five years. It was only at that time of her life that she entered religion with Mlle. le Conte, with whom she lived as lady companion. In Caen she fulfilled the greater part of the employments of the Community, so she was perfectly prepared for the office of superioress.

Sister M. of Saint Margaret Daisy, on the contrary, was given to the Lord from her youth, as well as Sister M. of the Purification Tison. The notices consecrated to these two Sisters speak only of their hidden life, full of acts of charity for the neighbor.

The departure of those Sisters took place during the first days of October, 1676. Here is the narration of their journey, according to a letter dated the 30th of that month, and addressed to Mother M. of the Nativity Herson:

My very honored Mother:

You must be anxious to hear how we fared on our journey to this part of the country. I take much pleasure in informing you of all the details. All our friends and best counsellors of Rennes made us see the importance of leaving without delay, in order to insure our affairs, so as to be living in the house, while the heirs of the property belonging to Madam, our foundress, were still in Rennes; if we were not there at that particluar time we might lose it all. We only left on October 25th, and had the consolation of being with our dear Sisters M. of the Trinity Heurtant and M. of the Holy Spirit de Porcon, who were leaving at the same time to go to Guingamp.

We passed through Vannes on coming here, and got the blessing of the Bishop, and obtained permission to have the Blessed Sacrament kept in our house, and of having it blessed. His Lordship granted it without any difficulty, and gave us many marks of his benevolence. Presently we descended to the Abbey of Our Lady of Joy,* and about a half league from Hennebont, where we remained two nights and one day, with the liveliest satisfaction, while our dear Sister Menard took a great deal of trouble about our affairs. They lent us several things for our church. M. le Senechal and his wife came to the Abbey to see us, and lent us their carriage to take us to Hennebont. They made us go to their house for some refreshment, after which they brought us, with a great number of the nobility, to take possession of the house. Madam le Senechal brought us beds and bedding—in fact, all that was necessary in that line; she borrowed what she could not furnish. She herself made our beds, and in the evening she furnished a splendid supper. We can truly say that M. and Mme. le Senechal were father and mother to us, were our protectors and rendered us the greatest service; this we experienced not only from them but also from their friends.

M. the Grand Vicar took the trouble to bless our house. Afterwards he sang the *Veni Creator* with ten or twelve ecclesiastics whom he had brought with him; thus were made two choirs. Then they solemnly entoned the *Kyrie* in the Mass of the Blessed Virgin, and terminated with the *Te Deum*. We had the Blessed Sacrament exposed all day, and in the evening M. the Grand Vicar came to give us Benediction. He loaned us a tabernacle, a luna, a silver censer and several other things. He certainly was for us the best of benefactors. M. le Senechal, himself, arranged all the benches in our church, and brought to our choir all that was necessary, pulpit, stands and seats.

The whole town greeted us very kindly and sincerely, and people of considerable influence honored us with their affection M. de Robien, one of the principal heirs of our foundress, had sent us word on the evening of our departure from Rennes not to take possession; but our counsel made us go quickly, as if nothing had been said. We are, so far, all right, for no one opposed our entrance.

I supplicate your Charity and all our dear Sisters to praise and thank God for having favored us with such signal success. If you have something for us do not hesitate to send it, for all we have is borrowed, as we found only the bare walls. But we are well lodged; the house is very fine, commodious and capable of housing at least one hundred persons, and with facilities for increasing. We have also a nice garden; it is not large, but it is in good condition . . . .

P. S.—Since I wrote my letter, we have sung Vespers, Compline, the Litanies, and Benediction: we are enclosed. All the magistrates came to our ceremony; M. le Senechal invited them. Our friends complained to us because we had deferred coming for such a length of time. If we had come here before the death of our foundress we would have found everything in good shape. They assured us that she had destined for our use at least to the amount of 20,000 or 30,000 livres, both in money and furniture. The pearls that she willed us were contested, and we have been obliged to leave them in the hands of the sister of the Superior of Rennes, in order to have them presented when there will be need.

One of our troubles in this country is, that we do not hear the town clock, and do not know how to regulate our exercises. It will cost us quite an item, at least 3,000 livres, to put our house in order for the needs of a Community, for it has been built for seculars, so we must make many arrangements. *

The hopes held out in this letter were not realized. Shortly after the heirs of Mme. de Brie raised up quarrels upon quarrels against the Sisters. Fearing they would be put out they did not dare to make any expenses in arranging the house for their own use, and this failure of stability hindered many a vocation. It was only after one year that any postulant applied. This was a young lady who was formerly very worldly. During a severe attack of illness, seeing the danger to which her salvation was exposed, she made a vow that if she was cured she would enter the new monastery. Her convalescence was almost miraculous in its promptness, so she demanded her admission, with five other young persons whom she had gained by her exhortations and example. Without doubt God was satisfied with her goodwill, for, after having worn the habit eighteen months, she was not received to her profession. On the contrary, all her companions persevered.

Sister M. of Saint Margaret was charged with forming the novices and postulants to the religious life, whilst the superioress fulfilled, almost alone, all the other employments of the house, from the kitchen to the infirmary. Since her arrival Sister M. of the Purification, who had been suffering even when she left Caen, commenced to feel worse attacks of that fatal disease of consumption, which finally ended her life on January 25, 1678. She supported her sufferings with great courage, and only gave up completely a few days before her death. She was thirty-nine years old, and was professed

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*This was a monastery of Bernardines, governed for more than thirty years by Madeleine le Cogneux. She died in 1688. It was she who received some of the Sisters after their expulsion.

twenty years. Her remains were buried in the cemetery of the Visitation, because the monastery had not a cemetery of its own.

As there remained only two professed Sisters, the Monastery of Caen, on their request, sent from Hennebont Sister M. of Saint Benedict Pierre, the niece of the first superioress taken from the Order. The Monastery of Guingamp had part in this sacrifice, because this Sister had been sent there only one month previous.

Mother M. of the Conception le Lieupaul was replaced at the end of her three years by Mother M. of Saint Margaret Daisy, who continued the good that had been commenced. The monastery gave great edification in the town. The people especially admired the pious life that the Penitents led—more so, those who had lived there some time. The trials and troubles that arose unstintingly from the heirs of Mme. de Brie continued. Two novices were taken home by their families the same day that had been arranged for their profession. Their parents were afraid the monastery would be destroyed, and so opposed the holy engagements of their daughters.

It was in the midst of these tribulations that the shining virtues of Mother M. of Saint Margaret became so much more brilliant on account of her great confidence in God. She was neither troubled nor discouraged. "God is the Master," she said; "nothing can happen except by His permission, and we are here on earth to do His Will." The extreme poverty of the house did not prevent her from receiving all the Penitents that presented themselves. God was often pleased to recompense her faith and zeal by sending her help in the most extraordinary and most unexpected ways.

The Sisters often admired her invincible patience in the midst of a long and severe illness. Mother M. of Saint Margaret had such control over herself that she never showed it on her countenance, even when she suffered the most. Not being able to walk alone she made them help her to the choir to sing the Office. It was there that a violent attack, accompanied with retchings, took her one day, on the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. From that time on her life was but one long martyrdom, which was terminated by a holy death on October 14, 1681. She was only thirty-seven years old.

Mother le Lieupaul took up the charge again and requested help from the House of Caen, which house generously sent her Sister M. of Saint Teresa Dubois. The lawsuit with the heirs of Mme. de Brie lasted four years. After that the monastery enjoyed comparative calm, the advantages of the foundation, and made the place more commodious for convent life, as well as for perfect regularity.

The Sisters were left in peace; the city was much edified by the virtue, and the great fruit their indefatigible charity had produced in souls, when God in His inscrutable designs permitted the destruction of such an edifying Community. One of the Penitents, through pure malice, was the cause of this misfortune. The Duke de Mazarin had enclosed there a young person whose sister was Lady of Honor to Madame de Maintenon. She, notwithstanding her piety, took the part of the guilty girl, and the Duke de Mazarin allowed her to leave. To take vengeance on the Community this unfortunate girl blackened the character of the Community by her malicious reports. She soon found ways and means for her vengeance to fall on the convent. Louis XIV, guided by the perfidious counsels of the Jansenists and the lawyers, foresaw peril to the States by this multiplication of religious Communities, sought out and closed without pity all those that had not received their letters patent of establishment. A great number of monasteries were thus destroyed through France.

The revolutionists of our day do not, in their hypocritical persecution, borrow pretexts produced from that period, but it is true to say that the spirit of evil is ever the same. The House of Hennebont was denounced in Parliament, and word was sent for its formal closing, which decree was effective at once.

God seemed to be preparing the Sisters for the terrible trial that awaited them; some time previous Sister M. of Saint Benedict Pierre was warned, during her retreat, that God was about to test their courage by a series of trials that would soon descend upon them. With perfect simplicity this Religious manifested the divine inspiration to her superioress, and both placed themselves upon their knees to offer to the Lord the sacrifice of their wills and their entire submission to whatever He had decreed in their behalf.

They were very soon made known to them. The day of the octave of All Saints, November 8, 1687, the profession of a novice was to take place when, at nine o'clock, a commissary of the Parliament, the attorney-general and a recording secretary came to the monastery. They ordered the doors opened in the name of the King, and after having called the Community together in the Chapter hall, gave them, without further parley, the knowledge of the decree, saying that on a given day the convent should be evacuated. That all the professed Religious would be distributed to the other Communities throughout the diocese, by the order of the Bishop; that the novices should be unveiled, and returned to their families. At this cruel and unexpected communication the Mother Superior fell on her knees, and said in a loud voice: "*Adoramus te Christe* * * * * * *," which sentence the Sisters had the courage to finish, notwithstanding the shock the news gave them, and the rush of bitter tears. This scene, grand in its simplicity, moved even the executors of this unjust measure.

Recovering somewhat from his emotion Father Ledoux, Vicar-General, and superior of the monastery, made the Sisters rise, and addressed them some encouraging words. Then the commissaries of the Parliament put the decree into effect. They consented to allow the novices who wished it to keep the habit, and said they might go to other houses of the Order. Seven of the professed Sisters or novices were sent to the Abbey of Our Lady of Joy, six others were placed with the Ursulines of Hennebont. The Convent of Ursulines of Vannes was assigned to Mother M. of the Conception and Sister M. of Saint Benedict. Before making the journey they helped the deputies of the Parliament to make out an inventory of the articles and furniture of the monastery. At four o'clock all these formalities were settled and the house deserted. The executors of this iniquitous order permitted two Sisters, who were to go to Vannes, to remain over night there. It was as sad for them as it was for the absent. God took care to sustain them interiorly by His divine strength. All the Sisters repeated many times that the marvelous effects of the strength communicated to them by an Omniscient God rendered them insensible to these sad events.

It seemed that Right Reverend M. de Vautorte gathered the Sisters together in the Monastery of Vannes. But as the poverty of this convent was very great, and they did not have the letters patent, it might, perhaps, be exposed to similar measures. The Vicar-General, charged with distributing the poor exiles in different houses, gave them the following beautiful testimony:

Raymond Ledoux, Vicar-General of the Bishop of Vannes—to our dear Sisters and Daughters, the Religious of Our Lady of Charity, Order of Saint Augustine, established for eleven years in the town of Hennebont, in this diocese, by the permission of the Bishop of Vannes, granted to the prayers of the inhabitants of this city—Greeting.

Not wishing that the separation that we have made today between members of this Community, and the closing of this house, by order of his Majesty, on account of not having been supplied by letters patent for your establishment, would leave some suspicion upon you of irregularity in your conduct, we feel it our duty to testify that your life has always been most edifying and eminently religious; that your establishment has veen of the greatest benefit to the city; that virtuous persons have been bettered by the example that you have given them; and that several libertines have been converted by your care and ardent zeal. In a word, we have every reason to hope that the glory of God and the salvation of the neighbor would have been much stimulated by the wisdom and holiness of your conduct, if Divine Providence had kept you longer in this place, where you have made such marvelous progress. This is the testimony that we have believed it our duty to give you in all sincerity.

Given at Hennebont, November 8, 1687.

The Sisters were much loved and highly esteemed in the town. The inhabitants tried every means in their power to obtain the reconstruction of the monastery. The more notable among them assembled and prepared the following act:

On November 21st the general assembly of noble citizens, peasantry and inhabitants of the city and Commune of Hennebont, held in the accustomed manner, after tolling of the bell, and presided over by the President M. de Beauregard Chabry, commandant for the King in the cities and fortresses of Port Louis, Hennebont, and Quimperle, present . . . . . *

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*Messieurs le Senechal, Allouee, Lieutenant and substitute of the Procurator of the King; the assisting nobility, James de Epiney, Lord of the Prairie; Mathurin Pitoyais, Lord of Kerlois; Vincent de Boys, Lord of Bot; James Eudo, Lord of Kedron; Jerome Cornic, Lord of Hilgouet; Joseph Jouan, Lord of Penhouet; Georges Boutouillic, Lord of Kergatourne; Louis Boutouillic, Lord of Pallevast; Vincent de Livois; Louis de Burel, Lord of VillaaToulla; Pierre Blanchard, Lord of Val; Yves Pitouais, Lord of Kerleano; William Touchart, Lord de la Sollaye; Pierre Morau, Lord de Kennic, and others representing the said Commune.

In the said assembly, the noble Charles Bausse, Lord of the Barony, Syndic, has shown that during the past days the Religious of Our Lady of Charity, Order of Saint Augustine who, with the permission of the Bishop of Vannes, and with the good pleasure of his Majesty, from whom they hoped to obtain letters patent, and who had taken a house in this city, have been obliged to leave, and by order of the King transferred to other religious Communities, because they had not heretofore obtained the letters patent for the authorization of their foundation and establishment; that it is well known that the said Religious were of great usefulness to the city and to the whole jurisdiction, having converted several girls of notorious life; and others, fearing to be enclosed there or elsewhere, have ceased their disorders; they have given spiritual exercises to those girls and women, by a retreat of eight days in the house; besides, they fitted up their house for their own use, and by their good behavior and excellent life therein for over eleven years have proved of invaluable aid to the citizens of Hennebont; since their foundation, by the dowries they received, they had a revenue fund by which they were able to subsist without being a charge to the city. We would esteem it a great favor if the Commune would make humble supplications to his Majesty that he grant them the letters to authorize their establishment.

Meantime, the Commune ought to deliberate, as we have done, in recognizing that the said Religious, since their establishment in this city, have been no charge thereon, that they procured all the good they could, or that could be hoped for from their establishment, took in and fed and clothed the Penitents at their own expense. We charge the said Lord Syndic to join the prayers and desires of the Commune to ours in presenting them to his Majesty, so as to obtain from his goodness, piety and benevolence the reestablishment of the said Religious, and to do so with all necessary despatch and diligence.

Done and sent by the said assembly the said day and year above mentioned, and signed:

BEAUREGARD CHABRY;
MATHURIN DU VERGIER, *Senechal;*
CHARLES BAUSSE, *Syndic.*

This act was as honorable for the city of Hennebont as for the Sisters themselves. It also proved that under this great King the municipal employes enjoyed greater liberty than under our Republican government. At least the right of remonstrance was not suppressed, nor were they punished who exercised that liberty. What subprefect of today could, like M. de Beauregard Chabry, blame an act ordered by the central power?

However, these steps, as well as those of more powerful personages still, did not have any good results for the Sisters. The petitions made by all the other monasteries for their reestablishment were not heeded, at least not in the manner the Sisters expected. A prophecy, made three years previous by Reverend M. Kerlivio, was realized. This holy priest had often said that God wanted a foundation in Vannes and not in Hennebont. After the dispersion the union of these two houses was effected.

Some months after they were dispersed the Sisters were permitted to gather again in the Monastery of Vannes. This was granted them during the vacancy of the episcopal See—that is, after the death of Bishop de Vautorte, which occurred on December 13, 1687. This house received ten choir Sisters, one Lay-Sister, four novices and one Touriere Sister. It was an heroic act of charity for a Community that was so poor and whose situation was so very precarious. However, Mother M. of the Trinity, who had been elected superioress, did not hesitate one instant. When the other Communities offered to take some of the Religious, and thus help in the good work, she quietly replied: "We must not separate what God has united."

This charity was soon recompensed. The House of Vannes obtained, contrary to all expectation, the letters patent in May, 1688, in which the King made a gift to this monastery of the revenues and furniture of that of Hennebont, on condition that they would bring there all the Religious that had been sent out. Mme. d'Argouge, herself, brought this good news to the Sisters, and all together sang the *Te Deum* in choir.

Some months previous, in a moment of great alarm, Mother M. of the Trinity had assured them in full chapter that the house would not be destroyed. As the Sisters were in the habit of seeing her prophecies fulfilled the obtaining of the letters patent did not surprise them.

Unhappily, only two of the four novices persevered; the two others had contracted tendencies contrary to the spirit of the Institute while they sojourned in the monasteries to which they were sent. They were not admitted to holy profession. It is only truly great souls that resist persecution; weak souls succumb. Persecution is, then, always to be dreaded, for if it makes some increase in virtue it hinders the germ of perfection that, in the time of peace, they are permitted to acquire.

Today in Hennebont they do not know where this monastery was, which at another time appeared to become so prosperous. We must adore, with those dear victims, the wonderful ways of God.

FOURTH MONASTERY—GUINGAMP

1676

CHAPTER I

FOUNDATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE MONASTERY—SUPERIORITY OF MOTHER M. OF THE TRINITY HEURTANT—DEATH OF SISTER M. OF THE SERAPHIM MOISAN

IN the recital of the foundation of Hennebont we have seen how Mother M. of the Trinity prepared at the same time the Monastery of Guingamp, fourth house of the Order. Mme. des Arcis told her monther-in-law, Mme. de Kervegan, the marvelous designs that God had on her. Being as pious as she was generous Mme. de Kervegan resolved immediately to use all her efforts, and promised four thousand livres for the new foundation. The recent marriage of her daughter with M. de Lasse, counsellor of the Parliament of Brittany, seemed to be a reason why she ought to be more careful of her wealth, in order to help the new couple, but the young magistrate besought his mother-in-law not to be troubled about them, but finish the work she had undertaken.

Mme. de Brie, foundress of Hennebont, gave it a yearly income of fifteen livres, and eighty-six bushels of corn for the future monastery, as we have already related.

These certain signs of the Divine Will engaged Mme. des Arcis to take the necessary steps to obtain the authorizations that seemed to be so indispensable, and which had to be obtained from the city and the Bishop of the diocese. To this end she made several journeys to Guingamp. Her family relations made it quite easy for her to do this business. The consent of the city was given on August 26, 1676. Right Reverend Balthazar Granger, Bishop and Count of Treguier, signed the letters of Institution on September 21st of the same year.

Even before obtaining those permissions M. and Mme. de Lasse both went to look up a suitable locality for the future monastery. On account of seemingly insurmountable obstacles they could not secure what they thought the most suitable; the very spot they had at first chosen was later on bought for the Hospital Ladies. Instead, they had to be satisfied with a site that was not a choice to them, but the best they could do was to take possession of the old houses of the suburb of Mont-Bariel. It was the place God had chosen, and the place that Mother M. of the Trinity had described so exactly to Madame des Arcis. And it was not easy to get the different proprietors to sell the houses where they had always lived. One good old lady, whose house and garden were the center of a fine plot of ground, refused every proposition, saying: "I was born here, and here I am going to die." Madame des Arcis was almost in despair, thinking there was no way of overcoming her opposition, when she resolved to address herself to the Blessed Virgin. She informed Mother Heurtant of her difficulties, and this good Mother, by letter, told her to wait until the feast of the Assumption before she would again approach the old lady about selling her property, assuring her if she asked her on that day she would find her more tractable. Madame des Arcis waited until the appointed day, found her completely changed, and so disposed to sell that as soon as she was asked she showed complete willingness, and even signed the contract at once.

Upon this spot they found a little statue of the Blessed Virgin, to which the inhabitants gave the name of Our Lady of Refuge. For over fifty years they had the childlike devotion, whenever they left their houses, of hanging the house keys around the neck of the statue, saying: "Our Lady of Refuge, guard our house from robbers and from accident." Their confidence was never misplaced. This was the reason that the good old lady loved and held on to the statue. Mme. des Arcis, to whom the name of the statue appeared providential, desired the place now with more eagerness. By stress of her persuasiveness and humble petitions she at length obtained it; we shall see later on that this statue became an instrument of divine favors.

The purchase money amounted to the sum of 5,100 francs, all of which was paid by Mme. de Kervegan. The most difficult part of the business was to accommodate those decayed ruins to cloistral use. To begin with, they first utilized the house where was found the statue of Our Lady of Refuge. Its length was thirty feet and the width twenty feet. The ground floor was converted into a chapel; the first story served at once as a refectory, kitchen and Community hall, and the granary was changed into a dormitory. The ceiling there was so low that it was difficult to put up beds, and it was impossible to walk along without touching it. It was covered with furze. The rest of the buildings were so miserable that they could hardly lodge the Penitents. It was surely a monastery planned on the order of Bethlehem, and even poorer, for the Gospel does not say that the Holy Family had any debts, and Mont-Bariel had many, even before the Sisters took possession.

Things were in this state, when one day Mother M. of the Trinity said to Mme. des Arcis, in Rennes: "We must prepare a chamber for our good foundress in Guingamp, for I have seen a cross on her shoulders so heavy that I trembled myself." Soon after Mme. de Lasse died, and this unexpected death made known what this vision signified. Mme. de Kervegan came to Mother M. of the Trinity for consolation in this terrible loss. Not being able to expect heirs for her property, since her child was dead, she only thought of assuring and giving it over to her spiritual children. She regarded as such all the souls that were consecrated to God in the new monastery, and trebled the price of the foundation.

The Religious designated for this new house were Mother M. of the Trinity Heurtant, superior; Sister M. of the Holy Spirit de Porcon, assistant, and Sister Menard, who always dressed in secular attire, in order to be more free to fulfil her duties as econome. The Annals say that this number of Religious was caused by some disagreements that occurred. It is certainly more in accordance with wisdom to send six or seven Sisters as is indicated in the Custom Book; all the observances are more possible from the first day if this is done. In the case we are discussing difficulties were imputed to the departure of Mother Heurtant and the death of Mother de Porcon. The Monastery of Guingamp had not, like that of Rennes, the good fortune of seeing its two foundresses remain longer than thirty years at its head. If it were so the trials of foundation and formation would not have been so severe.

The Sisters received a very gracious letter from Bishop de Treguier, in which he prayed them to hasten their departure, assuring them of his benevolence and protection. The letter was dated October 3d, and their departure took place on the 25th, in company with the Sisters sent from Caen for the foundation of Hennebont. In passing a river that had overflowed its banks their lives were in jeopardy. Sister M. of the Holy Spirit made a promise to Saint Anne to visit her sanctuary; her faith was immediately recompensed; they forded the river without any accident. The Sisters all together accomplished the promise of Sister de Porcon. After having seen the happy commencements of Hennebont Mother M. of the Trinity and her companions arrived at their destination on November 20, 1676.

The fervent superior passed a part of the first night in prayer, asking God to bless her labors. In ineffable communications God made known to her the names of the principal families that were called to give novices to the new foundation. The knowledge that Mother Heurtant received was clear, and the next day she designated them to Mme. des Arcis, and announced at the same time to her that she would be their companion in the novitiate. Mme. des Arcis did not think it her duty to accept as probable this astonishing prophecy. However, the death of her husband soon after permitted her to fulfil this destiny so strangely mapped out for her.

The day after their arrival, feast of the Presentation of the Holy Virgin, they had the ceremony of the blessing of the chapel and monastery. Mass was sung, and the Sisters renewed their vows in presence of the principal members of the clergy, who regarded this work as one of the most useful of its kind, especially to the city. The Carmelites confirmed the hopes entertained concerning the future usefulness of the new Institute. They made known to many persons and at different times that they had seen globes of fire falling over the spot where the new convent was now located.

Notwithstanding the great inconvenience attached to their installation the Sisters, instead of occupying themselves in improving their habitation, commenced by building a large house of four stories for the Penitents. The salvation of souls was their end; for this they must work. This house was finished fourteen months later, thanks to the generosity of the foundress.

The spiritual blessings were yet more abundant. In less than two years sixteen novices had received the veil. The most honorable families of Guingamp furnished them, and they were all young, of wealthy antecedents, and worked with a holy emulation in the practice of religious virtues, under the direction of their able superioress. It was thus her vision of the first night passed there was realized.

But the little house, and in particular the dormitory with its furze roof, became too insufficient for this increasing Community; indeed, its decay was threatening to be a complete ruin. While engaged in making the most urgent repairs the workman found a beam upon which the Sisters passed continually, which could not be used in the wall on account of its decayed condition. In their astonishment at this discovery the men said they could not understand how the Sisters were preserved from accidents, and they cried out such a thing must surely have been a miracle. The Community partook in the amazement and admiration of the workmen, and fervently thanked God for having preserved them from accidents, and they beheld in this preservation the recompense of their sacrifice and their fervor.

The neccessity for building became more evident. On December 3, 1677, the first stone of the church was laid in the name of Bishop Granger, by Reverend M. Poins, one of the rectors of the city. Hearts and crosses were engraved on this stone. The first stone of the building destined for the Community was laid by the foundress, Mme. des Arcis, and the confessor of the Sisters.

Fourteen months later they were able to take possession of the new building. They then commenced to labor in the same way and after the same approved method of Caen and Rennes. The Penitents were objects of the very greatest solicitude. Indeed, their wild notions and strange ways often exercised the patience of the Sisters. Very soon they were able to receive lady boarders, as well as the little boarders, or children belonging to very good families, who sent them to the convent for educational purposes. During the work about the building the workmen often found effects of the Divine protection. Several accidents occurred, but no one was severely injured.

It certainly was the result of the prayers of the Religious, and in particular of those of the pious superioress, whose life at the time, as well as in the past, was full of prodigies. The walls of the enclosure not being built the neighbors stole their fruit. Mme. des Arcis wanted to have the fruit picked before it was ripe, to prevent it from being stolen. Mother M. of the Trinity, noticing what she was going to do, said: "If you send any one up that tree he might fall and break his neck." Mme. des Arcis took no account of what she said; but hardly had the poor boy got up in the cherry tree than a big branch broke under his feet, and he fell in such a way that he was supposed to have been killed. However, they found he was living, and they had the Last Sacraments administered to him. Mme. des Arcis then recognized her fault, and casting herself at the feet of the statue of Our Lady of Refuge she made a vow that if he escaped death she would raise a chapel in her honor on that very spot. His cure was immediate; three days after the young man took up his work in the garden.

The chapel was commenced soon after, and they carried the statue there processionally with as much pomp as they could muster. Mother Heurtant earnestly begged Our Lady to listen to the prayers that would be ever addressed her in this modest sanctuary. This prayer was heard, for it was there the Community found protection and relief in the most trying circumstances; several novices especially, when tempted against their vocation, found there the grace of perseverance.

One night Mother M. of the Trinity was supernaturally warned that the demon was violently tempting a Penitent to escape. Taking with her a Lay-Sister she sought out the poor tormented soul; she had to go through the garden, and passing by a well that had been only recently commenced she found that a plank had been removed. Full of confidence in God, she strengthened herself with the sign of the cross, and walked without hesitation over this uncovered space, as if it had been *terra firma*, and the Sister that accompanied her had faith enough to follow her. The demon showed himself then under a visible form on the roof of the house. Overcome by the prayers of the superioress he was obliged to abandon his prey, and thus leave the poor Penitent in peace.

The extraordinary state in which this Mother was sometimes found during her novitiate in Caen was manifested now with more frequency. Very often after Holy Communion her countenance became wholly inflamed, and she remained several hours deprived of motion. Her Sisters would then carry her out of the choir to some remote place, where she would remain in a species of ecstatic sleep, during which she would utter some complaints from time to time, a certain proof of the violence of the Divine Love that made her suffer. In these moments the doctors were often called, but their science was put to the blush, for they had to frankly acknowledge that they were powerless to resist such attacks. She could be cured, ordinarily, only by a miracle. These marvelous facts, and the rapidity of the constructions, produced in the people, always over credulous, an effect wholly at variance with what naturally happened. Instead of attributing it to the holiness of this grand Religious they only saw in it a product of sorcery, and roundly rated Mother M. of the Trinity.

About this time a project for the foundation of Paris, and several other affairs, obliged her to go to Caen. A report was quickly afoot that the King had ordered her to leave, and go to Paris. Her return did not put an end to this rumor; when assured by those who had seen her in the convent and had spoken with her these sceptics boldly replied, to hide their confusion, that the Sisters had brought there some one that resembled Mother M. of the Trinity, but that she herself had not come, and would not come.

These calumnies went so far that, to put a stop to them, Bishop de Treguier ordered Mother M. of the Trinity to appear on the streets with her veil raised. She did this for a month without the least success. These trials left her perfectly tranquil. To acquire a more perfect resemblance with her Divine Master she would have been only too happy to die on the scaffold. These strange rumors did not stop until the Community made a vow to receive a choir Religious without any dowry, and one Penitent gratuitously. They lasted one year.

In our days calumnies are spread against religious Communities by a press making public profession of impiety and untruth, these calumnies increasing as gospel truths, and read and believed by thousands of readers and thinkers, as gross and unthinkable as those of which the Community of Guingamp was accused, and from which they were made to suffer. Our own age is so proud that even the best instructed are not immune from this foolish credulity. Today, more than ever, is it in evidence. We should not, then, despise our ancestors, nor rail at their simplicity, for we certainly have no right.

Before making the journey to Caen Mother M. of the Trinity had sent the adherents of her monastery to the labors and works that the first Mothers performed with the Blessed founder concerning the Constitutions and the Custom-Book. She herself took part in it when Mme. de Argouge brought her to the first monastery. The foundation of Paris was not made as yet—Mother M. of the Trinity returned to Guingamp, leaving in Caen Sister M. of the Infant Jesus Feger. This Sister finished her novitiate, and drew from that source the spirit of the Institute. Her profession took place on January 30, 1679, under the authority of the Bishop of Treguier who, six weeks later, sent her an obedience to return to Guingamp.

In 1680 the monastery was exposed to a great loss, even that of its generous foundress. She was attacked with pulmonary consumption; the doctors gave no hope for her ultimate recovery, but she was inspired to make a vow of enclosure in the convent if she recovered. She was so far recovered that later on she was in a condition to accomplish her engagement, and received the religious habit from the hands of the superioress under the name of Mary of the Passion. From that time her liberalities increased fourfold. She did not reserve to herself the liberty of disposing of her goods, but gave them for the use of the house.

God had, however, chosen a victim. He demanded a sacrifice of the monastery in the person of Sister M. of the Seraphim Moisan, niece of the foundress. The pious mother of this Sister had the custom of offering every day her children to the Lord; so virtue was really natural to them. She of whom we speak was raised by her uncle, after the death of her mother, until she was seventeen years old. Her uncle's name was M. de Keruastoue. Her record was without spot, like her virtue, but she seemed to have forgotten all her projects for the religious life, when Mme. des Arcis, her aunt, brought her to visit her brother, and invited her niece to come at least a few times in the year to visit Our Lady of Charity, before making up her mind to do what God willed, and thus study her vocation. This prudent conduct was as rare then as it is today. Mlle. Moisan, guided by a truly Christian sentiment, understood the sound wisdom of her aunt's advice. Notwithstanding her attachment for those who had taken the place of her parents in her regard she followed Mme. des Arcis to the monastery, which she entered as a boarder. The advantages of the religious life did not appeal to her at first; but having weighed the obligations of Christianity, and recognized the difficulty of their accomplishment in the world, she felt a slight inclination, more on account of her reasoning than from any real attraction. On the feast of Saint John Baptist, during the taking of the habit of one of the Sisters—who had not, however, the grace of perseverance—God touched her heart so deeply that it was impossible for her to make known what was passing within her: "Mother," she said to the superioress, "I have seen Paradise and hell, and the judgments of God. Oh, will He pardon me my sins? If I ask to be a Religious would they receive me?" Mother M. of the Trinity replied in the affirmative, on condition that she would be very resolved to give herself to God without reserve. She began her term of postulancy with the design of doing the Divine Will and saving her soul. The sweets of piety had no part in her resolution; all the trials and difficulties of the commencement did not make her relent; her fervor increased, and she received the habit on the feast of Saint Peter's Chains.

The life of Sister M. of the Seraphim appeared to be full of sweetness and candid simplicity. Occupied only with Jesus and Him Crucified, she showed herself a model of exactitude in all the exercises; the least failing gave her much disquietude. But these failings were so rare that her confessor found it difficult to find matter for absolution, so he often sent her away without absolving her, ordering her to continue her Communions. The artless novice then told her tale ofembarrassment to her mistress; Mother M. of the Trinity thought herself obliged to tell the confessor not to let her know when he did not absolve her.

Sister M. of the Seraphim was in the second year of her novitiate, and had exercised the charges of second dispenser and second portress to the general satisfaction of all, when a change was noticeable, and gave warning that her course was not for long. Her modesty prevented her mentioning it for two months; when she showed it to the doctor it was too late to apply a remedy. Contrary to the far-sighted scientists the progress of this tumor was so rapid that in a short time her life was despaired of. She made her profession and received the Last Sacraments with a faith and fervor that was truly edifying. The Holy Virgin wished, without doubt, to offer her, herself, to God, and unite her to her own offering, for she quitted this valley of tears on the eve of the feast of the Presentation of this good Mother. This was the first flower sent to Paradise from the Monastery of Guingamp. Its sweet and delicious perfume was most agreeable to the Eternal Father.

CHAPTER II

DEPARTURE OF MOTHER M. OF THE TRINITY—DEATH OF SISTER M. OF THE HOLY SPIRIT DE PORCON—SUPERIORITIES OF MOTHERS M. OF JESUS LE MERER, M. OF SAINT PAUL POUTREL, M. OF SAINT CECELIA NEEL—A NUMBER OF DEATHS

ALMIGHTY GOD demanded a most cruel sacrifice of this new house. In the history of the Monastery of Paris we have stated how Mother M. of the Trinity was, with some Sisters from Caen, sent to the house of Saint Pelagia in Paris to govern it. It was a great loss for Guingamp, because that house was so unsettled. The trial became yet heavier when death snatched Sister M. of the Holy Spirit de Porcon, which sad event occurred shortly after, on May 24, 1683.

The vocation of this Sister, as well as her saintly life, merits to be related here. By birth she belonged to the House of Brittany from which her parents, the Lampastres, were descended. They had kept the faith of their ancestors, and earnestly strove to transmit it to their children, for it was their greatest heritage. Mlle. de Porcon received a very careful education in the Convent of the Ursulines. At the age of twenty-one she declared her intention of embracing the religious life, without making known which Order she had chosen. She had made no definite choice, when she was brought by her aunt, Madame de la Haye du Loup, to the Monastery of Rennes to visit Mother M. of the Trinity. During her first visit she took the resolution to become a Religious in the Order of Our Lady of Charity and it became irrevocable.

Her parents were opposed to this step, and for a long time held out against it. The Institute was young; the house of Rennes had not even enough professed Religious; its poverty was extreme; the labors to which the Community was devoted were painful and repulsive. They asked her to forego her resolution and enter the Abbey of Saint Sulpice, where her aunt, Madame de Hilliere, was benefactress. Mlle. de Porcon replied: "I would rather be a Touriere in the Order of Our Lady of Charity than an Abbess elsewhere." And sure of being received without a dowry she resolved to go there in secret. Her mother went to bring her complaints to Bishop de le Vieuville, Bishop of Rennes; this prelate fully reassured her, so this good mother gave the fullest liberty to her daughter.

She commenced her novitiate. It was visible that she had received, as by intuition, the spirit of the Order. She applied herself especially to an entire detachment from the world, and strove to forget it entirely. Being named portress, in order that her mother and other relations would not recognize her, she endeavored to change her voice. When the holy institutor gave a mission in Rennes in 1670 he found her in these holy dispositions. It was a pleasure for him to speak with her and hear her confession, which pleasure was renewed several times. He consoled her in her interior troubles, and did not fear to say to Mother M. of the Trinity: "I never found so much courage and generosity in the midst of so many temptations and troubles. This novice is truly a daughter according to my heart; it is God Who has chosen her, and she will be faithful to her vocation and to the service of souls that shall be confided to her, as if she enjoyed daily the greatest consolations and interior lights." The entire life of Sister M. of the Holy Spirit proved the truth of his judgment, or rather of that prophecy.

These qualities were most remarkable in the charge of Directress of the Novitiate, which she exercised in Guingamp until her death. Several postulants presented themselves, who passed for saints in the world; Sister M. of the Holy Spirit said to the Mother Superior in Rennes: "Mother, I do not believe that those young ladies ought to be received; they have not the spirit of our Institute; there is something in their conduct that shocks me: I cannot believe they will persevere; it may be that my judgment is faulty, and that I am incapable of understanding how to guide them, but I feel sure that I will be undeceived if I am wrong." The inconstancy of those postulants, and later on the scandal given by one of them, proved she understood how to discern the proper spirit that should actuate them. She gave proofs of her unusual perspicacity while in Guingamp in relation to three or four novices; indeed, her capability was no ordinary one. She knew how to point out the easy methods of divine love to those who were judged fit for the religious life, and she exercised them in humility, which is the solid basis of perfection.

She gave a proof of her own progress in this virtue when, after the departure of Mother M. of the Trinity for Paris, it became evident that the burden of superiority would fall upon her. Perhaps her repugnance was excessive, for it contributed largely in altering her health. Shortly before the election she wrote to Right Reverend M. de Saillant, who, since 1679, had succeeded Bishop Granger in the See of Treguier, to arrange with her the catalogue of the Sisters that were eligible, and to allow her to get some name other than her own, so that her name would not be placed upon the list. Justly appreciative of the merits of this Sister the prelate replied that he did not mind what names were chosen so long as that of his dear daughter, Sister M. of the Holy Spirit, headed the list. The sorrow of the humble Sister was poignant. From that day on she was usually found bathed in tears. Her petitions to Almighty God to escape this responsibility were most ardent, but she placed no reliance on creatures. The Lord seemed to satisfy her desires and spare her the pains she dreaded, for she soon became ill, and died holily on Monday, May 24, 1683. Ardent prayers, processions and the sacrifices of the Sisters could not obtain the prolongation of a life so precious. The little three-year-old boarders imposed little mortifications on themselves to do violence to heaven. After her death her countenance became so beautiful as to fill beholders with admiration, and persons from the outside world peeped through the grate of the choir, even during the night, so as to feast their eyes on her heavenly beauty. Several months after her interment there issued from her tomb the most delicious fragrance.

This death left the monastery like a ship without a pilot. Mme. des Arcis, having become a widow, took the habit some weeks previous, under the name of Mary of the Annunciation Moisan. Being accustomed as benefactress to treat on every question relating to the government of the Community, when the question of an election arose she did not believe she should be deprived of an opinion, although she was only a simple novice, and her opinion prevailed—that a Sister should be elected from the convent. The Bishop of Treguier had recalled Sister M. of the Infant Jesus Feger, but she was only twenty-five years old, so the choice of the Sisters was directed towards Sister M. of Jesus le Merer, who was not yet thirty years of age, as they had thought. A monastery of such recent foundation, and that had only Religious barely out of the novitiate, would have done better by requesting a Religious from another house of the Order.

The new superioress was then in Paris with Mother M. of the Trinity. She arrived in Guingamp on August 6, 1683. The Sisters received her with much pleasure, but undreamed-of difficulties soon arose between her and the foundresses. Their intentions were pure, but their views entirely different. Mme. des Arcis, who had become M. of the Annunciation, had at heart the temporal interests of the monastery, with which she had busied herself with great zeal since the foundation. The Mother Superior considered that the first thing that needed looking after was the spiritual advancement of the Religious in general, and in particular that of Sister M. of the Annunciation, herself. She earnestly desired to see her enter into that spirit of humility and obedience so requisite for her as a novice, and to attain this end she deemed it prudent to suppress some little distinctions that had been judged proper to allow her up to that time. Perhaps it would have been more prudent to have waited until her progress in virtue had strengthened the novice and helped her to overcome herself.

At the commencement of 1684 Mother M. of the Trinity, on passing through Guingamp on her way to Vannes, after her departure from Saint Pelagia, understood all the weariness of those wrestlings, and engaged Mother M. of Jesus to rejoin her after her deposition. This proposition gave much pleasure to this profoundly humble soul. When her triennial was ended she asked the Bishop of Treguier to permit her to withdraw her name from the list for the second election. Under the direction of Mother M. of the Trinity she exercised herself so well in the practice of the solid virtues that the Sisters of Vannes called her Mary of the *humble* Jesus.

Mother M. of the Trinity used all her influence with the Sisters to have them admit Mme. des Arcis to profession. In this circumstance, as in some others, do they not show too much condescension for the benefactors of monasteries? This reproach has been made; we do not dare pronounce upon it. Here it would mean a sentiment of gratitude for the care she took and the duties that she imposed upon herself, of which this great soul had never taken full account. This virtue is so rare that any excess appears justifiable, and excusable. And of course even great saints have their imperfections.

Other very grave reasons seem to have dictated this conduct. In the world Mme. des Arcis had a great reputation for virtue; her leaving the convent would cause astonishment, and deeply grieve the Bishop. This prelate had, himself, given her the veil; he received her vows; he judged her worthy of governing the Sisters; after the deposition of Mother Mary of Jesus he charged her with the administration, by a formal order, until the election. Evidently, his intention was to designate her as the choice of the Community. But the requisite qualities were not found in her for the government of a religious house, and they could not decide to elect her.

Besides, the older Sisters manifested the desire of conforming to a better and more regular way of acting, and wished to choose a superior from the first monastery. Sister M. of the Annunciation found out these claims were eminently just; perhaps, also, the difficulty of commanding was felt by her. Be that as it may, one day the Sisters learned with keen delight that they were at liberty to take whom they would. They elected immediately Mother M. of the Infant Jesus de Bois-David, then deposed in Caen. This monastery could ratify their choice, but it proposed to them Sister M. of Saint Paul Poutrel, and on October 20, 1686, the formalities of her election were canonically made.

Under the firm yet sweet direction of Mother M. of Saint Paul peace reigned through the house. Her affable and polite manner gained all hearts, especially of the two foundresses, whom she skilfully handled. Allowing Sister M. of the Annunciation to exercise her activity and her special aptitude in the care of the temporals, the new superioress applied herself especially to the formation of the religious life in her whole Community, in which she was ably seconded by their marvelous goodwill.

During the first year of her superiority the monastery was delighted to receive the letters patent. The suppression of Hennebont showed how this favor should be prized; indeed, it was granted more through the prayers of the Sisters than through the power of their protectors. Bishop de Saillant, already named for Poitiers, announced it in these terms to the benefactress:

My dear Daughter:

I am transported with joy; indeed, I can not express how delighted I am in being able to send you, by Madame Deslandes, the letters patent of the King for the establishment and liquidation of your house. They are sealed, endorsed by M. the Chancellor and countersigned by M. Colbert, Marquis of Croicy. In the present state of affairs it is no small favor to have obtained such a grace. It is a miracle, and I attribute it to the prayers of my dear daughter and very dear novice. . . . . . You ought also to thank M. d'Argouge.

TREGUIER, September 5, 1687.

M. d'Argouge, mentioned in this letter, was Minister of State. We think that he was the former first President of the Parliament of Rennes, or at least his son.

The cares of the Community, and even of grave affairs, did not hinder the good Mother from watching with great solicitude over the conduct of the Penitents. Her constant application was in forming excellent mistresses, capable of instructing and guiding them. She discharged this duty personally. Continuous work is a great means of bringing those persons to God, and makes a very effetual penance. This zealous superior wished to cultivate the new enclosure that they had bought from the Dominican Fathers. Before the Community arose in the morning she would go out, armed with a pick-axe and spade, to give an example to the Penitents, and at the hour of meditation she would yield her place to the mistresses and go to the choir, all bathed in perspiration, to preside at that exercise.

Such mortified conduct in a superior produced excellent results in those poor souls, especially as she joined thereto the frequent use of prayers during work; she often recited the Rosary and the Office of the Immaculate Conception. Several very edifying deaths occurred about this time, which showed the efficacy of grace and the good effects of her wise direction.

Mother M. of Saint Paul, before her deposition, made the Community take the resolution of electing a superioress from the Monastery of Caen. Sister des Arcis and several others preferred Mother M. of the Trinity, who was then deposed at Vannes.

At the scrutiny the votes were nearly equal; it was on the second scrutiny that Mother M. of Saint Cecelia Neel was declared elected. On her arrival in Guingamp, having learned of the difficulties that had preceded her election, she did not have the courage to dissimulate the pain she felt. Her conduct with the Sisters, when she spoke to each, was constrained, and soon peace and union did not reign in the same degree in the house. Even the death of Sister des Arcis, which happened soon after, did not remedy conditions. However, the spirit of the monastery was truly good. The lives of the Sisters at that time proved it, but the reelection of this superior for the second triennial is, perhaps, better evidence.

This mark of confidence did not cure Mother M. of Saint Cecelia of her mistrust. She saw with pain the little pilgrimages that the Sisters made to the chapel of Our Lady of Refuge. She feared this action was a forerunner of breaches against her authority. To stop these visits the little statue was solemnly carried to the convent church. But the Holy Virgin showed that this transfer was not agreeable to her. The following night a considerable theft was committed in the garden, deprived as it had been of its faithful guardian. The superior of the Community understood the warning, and the statue was carried back to its first sanctuary.

The refusal of a little wine to a poor invalid was also punished by the immediate loss of an entire cask. The Sisters looked upon this unexplainable accident as a warning from heaven, and practiced most liberally that charity for the poor that should be our highest crown.

These trials came in a great measure from the too susceptible and narrow character of Mother M. of Saint Cecelia.

We have judged it wise to mention this incident here, to show the rocks ahead and make others avoid similar faults.

It also pleased God during this superiority to often visit the Community with sickness and death.

The first was Sister M. of the Passion, the good generous foundress. A year prior to her death she had made her solemn profession during a very serious illness. Having become blind and very infirm she bore her sufferings with great patience and submission to the Will of God. If sometimes her complaisance to her step-daughter was excessive it was attributed to her humility and her diffidence in herself, for her submission and respect for her superiors were always very great.

She was followed soon after by Mme. des Arcis, or Sister M. of the Annunciation. There were strange mixtures in this great soul; a virtue sometimes admirable, joined to her natural defects, often neutralized the effects of the first. In the world her union with M. des Arcis was unfortunate, and she always maintained her virtue even at the height of the most cruel vicissitudes. Her friends were full of admiration of her. In the cloister the thousand and one little trials found her less brave. She was not formed to the interior life, nor to obedience, and, hence, became for the Sisters the cause of the troubles that have been mentioned. Perhaps it would have been much better for her own peace of mind had she not embraced the religious life.

Much more complete was the virtue of Sister M. of All-Saints de Lisle. Like Mme. des Arcis, she had lived a long time in the world, busied with all kinds of good works under the direction of the Bishops of Treguier. She even took a conspicuous part in governing the hospital until the arrival of the Sister Hospitalers in Guingamp. Her counsels were sought for by all pious souls, and followed as if they were uttered by an oracle. On her entrance into religion and the novitiate the smallest rules had not a more faithful observer, and her fidelity never retrograded. God bestowed His graces upon her in abundance, and in particular bestowed the gift of prophecy on her. Hence, she knew very well and clearly perceived what the foundation of Paris would do for Sister M. of the Heart of Jesus de la Greve, although she had never known her.

But the greatest loss to this monastery was that of Mother M. of Saint Paul Poutrel, deposed. The Community would have, without doubt, elected her at the deposition of Mother M. of Saint Cecelia, if death had not, a few days previous, snatched her away, on May 13, 1699. This Mother lived in God, occupied in the employments confided to her by obedience, especially the formation of the novices. Her pious and able direction certainly contributed to establish in this monastery the true spirit of the Institute. More than any other, perhaps, she propagated the devotion to the Sacred Hearts, and veneration to the Blessed Eudes. She had the happiness of knowing him during the last years of his life, when full of merits he came to the Monastery of Caen to animate his dear daughters to the practice of the most sublime virtues. After his death, as we have related, she was the first that felt the effects of his powerful intercession.

The long sufferings that brought her to the tomb only served to show her spirit of mortification, her fidelity to the small observances and her admirable patience. The doctor obliged her to eat fat meat. One day the Sister who was waiting on her, not understanding the orders of the cook, brought some meat entirely tainted. The invalid endeavored to eat it without saying anything; the violence that she had to do her nature made her change color. It was then that the cook noticed her mistake. All in tears, she tried to excuse herself, but the dear patient replied with her wonted gentleness: "My dear Sister, you weep over what gives me joy; the good God loves me more than you do. You surely would never advise me to give away the best part of what was presented me by Jesus. When on the cross, and when He was nearer death than I am, what was He given? Now, do not mention this to Mother or the Sister Infirmarian." Notwithstanding the injunction the troubled look the dear cook wore made the Mother Superior inquire its cause. As soon as she was made aware of the case she went to excuse the matter to Sister M. of Saint Paul. She replied with her accustomed sweetness and humility: "My dear Mother, do not worry about such a trifle. Our Lord has already recompensed me, and I am confused to see you take to heart such a little thing. Our dear Lord has given me many graces since that occurred, and every day my poor soul has been feeding on His choicest goodness."

One day she noticed that she had been less faithful than ordinary to those trials so usual in Communities. Her piety was alarmed, and as they tried to excuse her on account of her occupations and her infirmities, saying these were sufficient without any other species of subjection, she replied: "I do not see how a daughter of Our Lady of Charity could neglect the little practices of religion, if she considers that the Heart of her Divine Spouse allowed Himself to be drawn to His beloved by a single hair of her head, or a single glance of her eyes. I ought to be so much the more faithful, that having still longer to live, I have need of meriting His favors, in order that He may forget my numerous faults in His service. . . ."

When Holy Week arrived the Sisters were afraid she would try to assist at the Offices, and they hastened to the Mother Superior to forbid her to attend. When she was notified of this step the poor infirm nun went to seek the Mother, to beg her not to pay heed to the petitions of the Sisters, but to permit her to employ all her strength in praising God. "My desire," she said, "is to imitate the little nightingales in the woods that died singing His praises." If this favor was not granted her it is certain that her assiduity at all the Offices, the ceremony of the *Mandatum* and the exhortation that she wished to give the Penitents, instead of the superioress, increased her illness so much that after Easter she had to take to her bed. The doctor was then called, and he reproached her with spending the Lenten season too rigorously. She replied: "Doctor, you never neglect anything that would render you more proficient in your professional career; I am a Religious, and I must do the works of one, and strive to make myself perfect in the practice of mortification and in the acquisition of all religious virtues."

Her love of holy poverty alarmed her over the expenses that the Community incurred for her cure; she showed a genuine fear, saying her vow extended to the time of sickness as well as health, and it would be better to use the money expended on her for the welfare of the Penitents, and to enable the Community to receive them. One of the Sisters, making allusion to her name, told her then that the monastery would never fail having souls to convert, but they would need a new Saint Paul to preach to them; the invalid replied to this observation: "It is not he who sows the seed that feeds us, but He who causes it to bear fruit and who gives fruitfulness to the seed. Be faithful to Him, and you shall never need spiritual succor. Besides, permit me to tell you that these expenses are useless to me. I am not in the habit of such things, and care only for what is necessary. That is why, when the doctor visits me, he writes his prescription, saying what I ought to take and when I must take it, so the disease will not make too great inroads, as he says, into my system; this serves me as a Rule which, when followed, gives me the merit of obedience." That is why she executed the doctor's orders with such fidelity during her illness; even the infirmarians could never discover if the potions were pleasing or repugnant to her.

The increase of the disease made her desire a visit from the confessor. As he told her to make a request, like Saint Martin, she responded: "Oh, my Father, what comparison can there be between that great saint and a poor sinner like me! I do not refuse to live, nor do I refuse to die. May the holy Will of God be done!"

At the end of the superiority of Mother M. of Saint Paul the Bishop of Treguier had conceived some strong prejudice against her, which caused her numerous humiliations and keen suffering. The confessor warned her that his Lordship was about to demand a reckoning of her. Her humility asserted itself in all its genuineness, and she replied in all simplicity: "I assure you that I do not feel any disquiet, nor shall I endeavor to justify myself before men; I will leave the care of my justification to God, before Whom I desire to stand acquitted of my sins by a complete satisfaction. Nothing shall be dearer to me than this humiliation." Her director wished to find out her sentiments regarding those that had calumniated her to the Bishop. "There has not passed one single day that I have not prayed for and pardoned them," she replied. "They were, perhaps, deceived themselves, and had no intention to blacken my character. Whatever was the cause, the worry that it was to me has been amply compensated for by the happiness I feel in being able to die a daughter of Our Lady of Charity."

During her agony, her peace and tranquillity surprised the Community. One Sister asked her if she suffered much. "Yes," she replied; "I suffer all that a body can endure before the soul quits it." "You have, then, resolved never to complain while you are ill?" asked the Sister. "By the way you speak," she replied, "you would have me think that such a resolution is above my strength, but I understand too well that my lack of virtue would not allow me to undertake anything so perfect; I always complain more than our Divine Model Who only complained twice during His passion—once in the Garden of Olives, and again on the cross before expiring."

The Sisters whom this holy nun had formed to virtue often recalled, as well as gathered, many other sayings which are truly edifying, and which we regret not being able to reproduce here. In her regard we may well cry out: *"Pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors Sanctorum."*

Mother M. of Saint Paul Poutrel was only forty-five years old when she finished her earthly pilgrimage; she breathed her soul into the hands of her Creator on June 13, 1699. Her death was a grief to the whole town; her calumniators proclaimed her holiness.

The beauty of her countenance seemed to show the happiness her soul enjoyed. A marine officer thought that they had painted her face to give it such a beautiful color, and when he was assured nothing of the kind had been done he cast himself on his knees to pray to her; he said he could not doubt her sanctity. The sight of her blessed remains, so youthful and blooming, as it lay in still death urged a young lady to demand her entrance into the novitiate. This sudden vocation was wonderful. At first this young lady felt great repugnance for the Institute of Our Lady of Charity.

The many deaths were a cruel trial for the Community, and for Mother M. of Saint Cecelia in particular. Of a sudden, report was spread through the city that the pestilence had visited the convent. No one would dare speak even to the Touriere Sister when she went to the town. Several families imagined that the proper care was not given to the Sisters when they were ill. It was in the midst of these trials that Mother Neel, ill herself, was deposed at the end of her term of superiority.

CHAPTER III

SUPERIORITY OF MOTHER M. OF SAINT ISIDORE HELLOUIN—DEATH OF SISTER M. OF SAINT CECELIA NEEL AND OF SISTER M. OF SAINT THERESA ALLAIN

THE choice of a new superioress was of grave importance. The largest part of the Community turned their eyes towards Caen for a Sister, but that monastery raised some difficulties, on the grounds that it was a violation of the Rule, on account of the loss of many of its best subjects. A letter from Bishop de Kervilio and the earnest request of the Sisters surmounted these difficulties. The election was presided over by this prelate on June 14, 1699, and Sister M. of Saint Isidore Hellouin was elected. In his letter of obedience Bishop de Nesmond specified that it was only for three years.

The history of Caen has already made known the great ability of this Sister for government. The House of Guingamp fully appreciated it, and was the first to enjoy her maternal guidance. From the moment of her arrival she gained all hearts; forgetting the past she gave every mark of affection and confidence to all the Sisters. Thus union and charity were promptly reestablished, and from that time on those two virtues reigned unremittingly in the monastery. Some of the first trials and first consolations of this remarkable superior were the edifying deaths of Sister M. of the Infant Jesus Feger and Sister M. of Saint Cecelia Neel.

The first was one of those who had suffered most in the late troubles; she always prayed earnestly, and with an unfailing faith and confidence, that God would allow her to die while the Community was being governed with peace and tranquillity. So shortly after the arrival of Mother Hellouin she asked permission to go on retreat, and wished to prepare for death by a general confession. The Mother Superior proposed to have her own brother come, as she knew she would treat with him with more confidence, but through a spirit of humility she addresed herself to the confessor of the Community. After that event she lived in the sweetest calm, blessing God for the graces He had bestowed upon her; as death approached this peace was not disturbed. After having asked pardon of the Community with humility and contrition, during which event the Sisters were deeply moved, she died sweetly and calmly four months after the arrival of Mother Hellouin.

Mother M. of Saint Cecelia had been ill a long time before her deposition, so her earthly career did not last much longer. Her sufferings served to show that if the gift of discernment of spirits had not been given her, she had a high degree of the patience and all the virtues of a good Religious. On January 1, 1700, believing she was at the point of death, she asked that the prayers of the agonizing would be recited for her, but in a moment she interrupted them, and asked them to sing some canticles of divine love. She then entoned the *Te Deum,* and the *Laudate Dominum.* It was a painful but consoling spectacle to witness the joy of that dying nun, who wished nothing else in this life than the employment of the angels, which she hoped to continue throughout eternity. She passed eight days in those sentiments, expecting the coming of her celestial Spouse, and she was at length reunited with Him on January 8th. She was only forty-two years old. The tranquillity of her death was a clear proof of her pure and holy intentions The goodness of God is so great that we cannot believe that acts blamable in our eyes are so in the eyes of an All-seeing Judge; we believe that on account of their purity and holiness of intention they will receive a fitting recompense. The tranquil death of Mother Neel confirms this opinion.

In her government Mother Saint Isidore made use of the same zeal for the good of the Penitents as for the perfection of the Sisters. It very often amounted to heroism. Their hearts were touched by her kindness; those who were more or less stubborn at first were gradually overcome by her persevering efforts and prayers as well as by the rigorous austerities she imposed upon herself for their conversion. We may remark here that, although the saints are in every way to be admired, they are not to be imitated in every way. One Good Friday, moved by a very strong inspiration, so strong, indeed, that she could not resist it, she took with her a Lay-Sister, whose perfect spirit of obedience she was well aware of, and went to the hall of the Penitents. After having spoken for some time, with great energy, of the gravity of sin, the sufferings and humiliations of the Savior, the pains they themselves deserved, she added, addressing herself to one who was more hardened than the others: "I wish, after the example of our Divine Master, to take upon myself the chastisement of your obstinacy." Then uncovering her shoulders this humble superioress ordered the Lay-Sister, in the name of holy obedience, to give her the discipline with all her strength, and not spare her.

This Sister said later that nothing she ever did cost her as much. The Penitents and the mistresses were moved to tears. She, for whom these humiliations and sufferings were accepted, was at least momentarily touched, but her conversion was not lasting. The superioress, as she expected, found that her conduct was severely blamed, and treated as the height of imprudence, but she formed of these censures a bouquet of myrrh, which she carried lovingly in her heart, happy in this new resemblance to her crucified God.

The fruits of so many sacrifices gradually ripened. A marvelous change was noticeable among the poor wandering sheep, and several died most consoling deaths. One of them in particular had been twenty years in the house, by the desire of her family, but kept in her heart an implacable hatred against the authors of her detention. The exhortations of Mother Saint Isidore changed her heart completely, and fearing that she would fall back into her former loose life she asked and obtained by her ardent prayers the grace to die during the government of this good superior.

So much zeal and virtue, it would seem, should have been approved by man as well as God. But it was not so. A misunderstanding gave great discontent to Bishop de Kervilio. Mother Hellouin had asked, during a conversation, to enlarge the chapel and to build a house for the almoner. When the work was begun the prelate remembered nothing about her having asked his permission; he acted very cold towards her, looking upon what she had done as very independent, and severely reproached her; he went so far as to forbid the architect to go ahead with the building, and to herself he said if she went any further she would do so under pain of excommunication. Soon after he paid a visit to the monastery. Contrary to his expectations, he found peace and union flourishing in the Community, and each one loved and esteemed their superioress. At the close of the visit he could not refrain from expressing his gratification.

Shortly before the end of this triennial Sister M. of Saint Theresa Allain died. This death occurred on March 18, 1702. Her relations with the Blessed Eudes, her generous vocation and her virtues merit a short explanation. Piously educated in the Convent of the Ursulines of Guingamp she wished to become a Religious, but her father opposed her. Against her will she married M. du Boisdour Moisan, eldest brother of Mme. des Arcis. Love for the world drew her heart away, notwithstanding the many graces with which she had been prevented, and she gave herself up to all the pleasures that her rank and great fortune permitted. However, God took care to throw a dash of bitterness into the pleasures she sought so eagerly; still, she never abandoned the practices of religion, especially charity to the poor.

A suit in the Parliament of Rennes gave her an opportunity to come to that city in 1670, during a fruitful mission then being given by the Blessed Eudes. She heard several of the sermons, and felt extremely happy listening to him. One day an insolent young man interrupted the preacher and caused annoyance to the audience. To attract every one he got up on the paneling that ornamented one of the chapels of the church. The holy missionary apostrophized him very energetically; told him he was doing the work of Satan, and threatened him with speedy chastisement if he continued to hinder the fruit of the divine Word. To the great astonishment of the audience the young man fell off his perch, and the fall was so severe that they took him up for dead. Mme. Moisan, who was a witness of this immediate answer to his threat, left the church very much impressed.

Mme. des Arcis, her sister-in-law, had her meet Mother M. of the Trinity. This acquaintance made her enter into herself. Mme. Moisan was a widow, childless and forty years old when she founded the Monastery of Guingamp. She aided Mme. de Kervegan, her mother-in-law, to the best of her ability, and soon manifested the desire of consecrating herself to God. The execution of this design occasioned her numerous sacrifices. By order of Mother M. of the Trinity, Sister M. of the Holy Spirit did not spare her; she corrected her as if she were a young girl of fifteen years, and contradicted her on every possible occasion.

In these battles Sister M. of Saint Theresa was sustained by the knowledge that it was God's Will. She consulted the Blessed Eudes before her entrance. The recital of this consultation would lead us to suppose that they met, without stating the time or circumstance. Other indications are that they met in Rennes, or during the affairs of the seminary, or during the missions in Brittany, as the Blessed was to be found in any of those places. Having promised Mme. Moisan to consult God concerning her project this good Father prayed and celebrated holy Mass for her intention. God showed him then the sorrows and trials from which his prayers delivered this soul, and at the end of Mass this lady found herself immersed in a great peace of soul and filled with the desire to accomplish the designs of God on her.

Some time after she took the habit the temporal affairs of Sister M. of Saint Theresa became so involved that she was obliged to return to the world to set them in order. She wrote to the Blessed founder to advise her. He replied that she ought not to go, that the Blessed Virgin had chosen her to be the daughter of her Immaculate Heart. At the same time the holy Father exhorted her to perseverance, and made her a present of one of his books, in which he had written several wishes and his ordinary formula of benediction: *"Nos cum prolo pia benedicat Virgo Maria."*

The docile novice kept this book all her life, and was faithful to the advice of her holy director, so that fourteen years of novitiate and the trials of the monastic life could not make her renounce her vocation. Her profession did not take place until June 16, 1692; it was necessary to make it in secret, for fear that her creditors would oppose it.

From that day she appeared completely animated with the desire of acquiring all virtues; her spirit of poverty was so much the more remarkable because it was wholly opposed to her former habits. While she lived in the world she did not know how to refuse herself any gratification; her delicacy was such that she would not touch a brass chandelier without covering it. While in the monastery she accepted and sought out the hardest work, and looked for the worst articles for her own immediate use; the heaviest and most ungainly dish she could get was hers alone.

Her obedience was prompt and simple. If a Sister expressed any surprise that a person of her age should conform to the will and desires of the superiors she would reply: "It would be much easier for me to command, but not so easy to bring others to share my opinion."

Long before her death she had given up all little particularities that had been given her on account of her former position. Rising so early in the morning was always painful to her; still she was always one of the first at meditation. Once only she yielded to laziness, but she did her penance for it in the refectory.

Her spirit of prayer grew heavenward during her infirmities. On the feasts of our Lord and His holy Mother she had the custom of reciting the Hail Mary a thousand times. In the last year of her life, during the octave of the feast of the Divine Heart of Jesus, she recited in its honor the salutation *Ave, Cor Sanctissimum* a thousand times. The fear of the judgments of God penetrated her during her last retreat, but she had recourse to Mary; she prostrated herself before one of her images, and received an interior assurance that this Mother of Mercy would not abandon her. Peace was restored to her soul, and did not quit her even at her death.

At the end of her superiority, Mother M. of Saint Isidore rendered the most favorable testimony of the religious spirit and the capacity of the Sisters:

"They can only attribute," she said, "their humility to the sentiment they have of their incapacity, which makes them think they are good for nothing; I have endeavored to make them recognize the talents that God has given them. This conduct has succeeded perfectly. According as their success became more evident in their charges I would remark others to them, to inspire them with esteem for all; in this way they have become good officers. I have seen them perform acts of simplicity and obedience that were very edifying. One evening during meditation, as I spoke to a Sister in the ante-choir, they called me elsewhere; I merely told her to wait for me, thinking I would be gone only a few minutes; but I had to do one thing after another, and forgot all about coming back. She remained there until eight o'clock that night, and perhaps would have remained longer if they had not come after her to go to her supper. When asked why she remained there so long this dear Sister replied: 'Mother told me to wait for her, and I did not think I could leave the ante-choir without she telling me.' The mortification of those Sisters was very rigorous. The greater number of them used disciplines of iron; they never cut away the decayed part of the fruit they were served with in the refectory, but took it as it came. One day I corrected a Sister because the sleeves of her chemise did not go below the over sleeves, as the Rule indicates. But in trying to show her how to put them properly I was surprised to see she had none. By mistake they had given her a chemise without sleeves. But I was much edified to see that, reproved for this little failing, which was involuntary, she never made an excuse, and went on her knees as if she had been guilty."

This testimony that Mother Hellouin left in writing is evidently that which was given to Bishop de Kervilio, and which decided that prelate to take the next superior from the same Community. He was very desirous of keeping this wise directress, but it was not possible; she was elected in Caen so that Community had the first claim to her. The prelate, himself, presided at the election, on June 16, 1702, and Sister M. of Saint Catherine Moisan was elected.

CHAPTER IV

GOVERNMENT OF MOTHERS M. OF SAINT CATHERINE MOISAN, M. OF THE PASSION DE MURADO LE GOFF, M. OF THE HEART OF JESUS DE LA GREVE AND M. OF SAINT CECELIA MURADO LE GOFF

THE new superioress belonged to the same family as the foundress. While very young she heard the heavenly *Veni,* and responded to it with a large and generous heart. Her entrance in the novitiate took place on the feast of the Divine Heart of Jesus, and from that time she conceived for that devotion that love and zeal that knew no bounds, and had the happiest and holiest effects upon her life. After a novitiate full of trials and studded with fervor, her superiors employed her successively in all the different charges. The last she occupied before her election was that of Mistress of the Penitents.

Her prayers, daily mortifications, and fervent exhortations rendered her zeal most fruitful, and gave to those girls a great esteem for their holy mistress. One of them, however, proved too headstrong, and turned a deaf ear to the voice of God; everything seemed to harden her. Sister M. of Saint Catherine afflicted herself before God; she certainly was in agony for this erring sheep. A thought occurred to her that this soul would be brought to see the error of her ways if she could give her a proof of how good it is to serve the Lord. Presently, by an act of truly heroic zeal, the mistress prayed her Divine Spouse to deprive her of all consolations with which it was His wont to send her, and make her feel the bitterness of His death, of His crown of thorns and of His cross, so as to draw this rebellious heart to His love. A prayer so admirably disinterested was heard at once. The Penitent was deeply touched with the desire of working out her salvation; but a most painful aridity became the portion of her who had obtained this signal favor, and this state was the present she received from her Divine Spouse, and lasted for forty-five years.

Such was the new superioress. Born in 1672, she had been only the age required by the Council of Trent. Her election was for her a hard trial; the violence she had to do to herself caused an illness. Her submission to the Divine Will gave her new strength, and urged her to go forward untiringly. Her administration was evidently blessed by God. Numerous postulants presented themselves, full of ardor and goodwill, and several extraordinary graces encouraged them in their vocation. The Blessed Eudes made them feel the power of his intercession in favor of one of the novices, who had a grave infirmity, which would have hindered her from making her profession. Here follows the attestation which was given by the novice herself:

> I attest, in the presence of God, that about a month before the feast of our worthy founder, Father John Eudes, I was attacked with deafness to such a degree that I had much difficulty in hearing the chanting of the Divine Office, and could not even hear myself, so I could hardly follow the choir. They put blisters on me, but they were ineffectual, and my condition was considered incurable. During that time I had the happiness of going to the class of our Sister Penitents, where I occupied myself in writing the life of our good Father, which was translated into verse. When the mistress left I had much trouble in trying to listen to the Penitents, so was obliged to impose silence on them until the return of the mistress. My greatest affliction lay in thinking that I would be useless in the salvation of souls; needless to say, I felt it would be impossible for me to be employed with them. The edification that the reading of the life of our Blessed Father occasioned in me made me feel I ought to have recourse to him for my cure, and for several days I said short prayers to him.
>
> On the eve of his feast I assisted at his litany, which the Community recited in a particular part of the house. All at once I felt a rumbling sound pass through my ears. I soon perceived that I could hear better; I joined my prayers to those of our Sisters in asking through his intercession, entire deliverance from my infirmity, if it were for the glory of God and my own salvation. At the end of the litany I felt that I was perfectly cured, and though previously I was much troubled with toothaches, which caused earaches, too, I felt that all pains were gone and that I could hear distinctly.
>
> SISTER M. OF THE ASCENSION CHEVALIER.

The cure was permanent, since that Sister was sent to Paris in 1720 to help in the government of the Madeleine.

A professed Religious was cured of the same infirmity, under pretty much the same circumstances.

Another novice was tormented with such scruples on the obligations of the religious life that she was on the point of leaving the house. She was counselled to have recourse to the intercession of the Blessed Eudes; relief was prompt; her trials ceased in such a manner that she asked most earnestly for the favor of being professed. Later on she fulfilled all the functions of the Institute; she had great talent for the direction of the Penitents.

The Annals state many other facts no less marvelous, which go to prove how great was the veneration for the institutor in the monastery at that time.

The care of the Penitents was always very dear to Mother M. of Saint Catherine. While she directed them she noticed that those who had sincerely returned to God, and wished to remain the rest of their days in the monastery, suffered much from being mixed up with the others. To render the situation more sweet and easy to the converted ones she bought some land on which to build apartments for the exclusive use of these converts. She also fitted up for them a little oratory, dedicated to Saint Madeleine, as well as a cemetery for their last resting place.

Being a worthy daughter of the apostle of the Sacred Hearts her ardent piety urged her on to propagate this devotion by all the means in her power. The feasts were always celebrated with much solemnity in the monastery, but Mother M. of Saint Catherine wished to associate the people in this devotion in a more direct manner, and to make of the chapel a center for this propagation. Two altars were consecrated, one to the Divine Heart of Jesus, and the other to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. On March 31, 1705, she obtained a Bull for the erection of a confraternity in their honor, and Bishop de Kervilio, with a number of clergy, was the first to be inscribed in the book of the confraternity.

She obtained still more favors in this regard from the Bishop of Treguier. This prelate permitted all the priests who so desired to recite the Offices of those feasts as a Canonical Office during the octaves. We have no example at this date of a more extended permission. It contributed much in propagating the devotion to the Sacred Hearts among the clergy and people. The Annals say that this good Mother wished to convoke all the priests of the province on those feasts; when any one entered into her views in this regard she willingly paid the expenses of the journey and sojourn in Guingamp. The chapel of the monastery was much frequented.

To this active propaganda is due, we believe, the propagation of the Society of the Daughters of the Heart of the Admirable Mother. This society had already existed in the town, but under the influence of Mother M. of Saint Catherine it multiplied tenfold. From Guingamp it spread into the diocese of Saint Brieuc where, in our own days, it is in a flourishing condition, and productive of much good.

Bishop de Kervilio was of a very lively character, and showed his authority, if we may judge by the Annals. Towards the end of the superiority of Mother Moisan he became much displeased with her because she had sent away a novice, a relative of his, and a Penitent whom he, himself, had placed in the monastery. Placed between the desire of pleasing this prelate and the duty her own conscience imposed upon her Mother M. of Saint Catherine did not hesitate. The two last years of her superiority were very painful to her, on account of this dissatisfaction; however, she had the joy of seeing the beginning of the foundation of Tours, of which house, as we shall see, she was the first superior.

She was succeeded by Sister M. of the Passion le Goff. She also belonged to the family of the foundress, and had been raised by her in the monastery from the age of three years, as well as her two sisters. She was attacked by a low fever when she was ten years old, and it was proposed that she should go to Paris for change of air. Promises of pleasures, capable of tempting any child, could not tempt her to make the journey. Her heart was with God; she felt that she belonged to Him. In returning from the Monastery of Vannes to that of Guingamp she had the courage to pass near the home of her parents without entering, afraid it might weaken her resolution.

However, there was a time when her vocation was strongly shaken, as well as that of her sister. Some imprudent conversation in which her companions of the boarding school indulged in was the cause of it. The departure of their eldest sister for the parental home contributed, also, to make her look upon the religious life with a sort of terror. Those were the dispositions when, on leaving for her First Communion, Mother M. of the Trinity made a sign to our boarder to follow, and to her great surprise read her soul. Mother then said to her: "Where will you go, my dear child, if you listen to the demon; if you leave now you will never become a Religious, and you will be damned if you lose your vocation. Besides, you will only enjoy a few pleasures of the world, because you will die young; if you do the contrary you will live a long time, and shall be saved." We do not know where this happened, but the impression of those words was decisive; they had the same effect on the younger of the two Sisters, to whom Mlle. de Murado gave her confidence. Both thought now of naught else save entering the novitiate.

Sister M. of the Passion entered at the age of fifteen years, and her wisdom increased daily. She was hardly thirty years old when she was elected superior. From that moment she looked upon herself as belonging completely to the service of the Sisters. Her ability supplied for her inexperience; she informed herself concerning every detail of the employments, and of the capacity of the Sisters who were filling them, and remembered the strong as well as the weak.

The buildings occupied by the Sisters were completely insufficient; the young superior resolved to build a more commodious dwelling. Bishop de Kervilio gave the permission. These constructions caused many difficulties. Mother M. of the Passion remarked: "A superioress who puts up no buildings is ignorant of the greatest solicitudes of the government."

The most important act of her second triennial was the foundation of Tours in 1714. We shall give the details of the history of this house.

Mother M. of the Heart of Jesus de la Greve succeeded her that same year. The life of this remarkable Religious properly belongs to Paris, of which she was the foundress at the end of her superiority. She finished the buildings in Guingamp, and showed by her wisdom and goodness what might always be expected of her.

The Order of Our Lady of Charity owes a debt of gratitude to Bishop de Kervilio for those two foundations. The energy of this prelate was needed to overcome the repugnance of the Sisters for that of Paris. God visibly blessed the zeal and the decision that he showed in these two circumstances. The Monastery of Guingamp was not impoverished by these two foundations; vocations were numerous up to the time of the Revolution, and the subjects were choice and plenty.

After the departure of Mother M. of the Heart of Jesus, Mother M. of the Passion was reelected. She reappeared at the head of the Community enriched with a new experience. During her first superiority her zeal was judged to have been a little overstrained. She was astonished when faults were not corrected after she notified the delinquents, and sometimes her correction was a little too hasty; it was not so now, for sometimes she waited for months before she would make a correction—that is, until a favorable moment presented itself.

Her eagerness to receive admonitions, as well as counsel and advice, aided her very materially in acquiring that wise prudence that so well became her. Narrowness of ideas, obstinacy in not being persuadable, self-conceit and some other defects are certain proofs of a person being incapable of governing.

Another quality, noticeable in her administration, consisted in raising the merits of the Sisters, and attributing to them the good that was done in their employments. To one Sister, who had asked her the reason of this conduct, she replied with good reason: "My daughter, religion is a body, the superior is the head; it is necessary that each takes her own proper place. If she mixes the functions of the feet and the hands, otherwise than to inspire and direct them, disorder will follow. Each officer has her rights, a superior has hers, and when they work together there is harmony; she should not look for every passing trifle herself, nor attribute to herself the general well-being of the house, but give the honor of the coveted success to others; thus they will be encouraged, and the Sisters become more attached to their superioress."

In 1726 Mother M. of Saint Cecelia de Murado le Goff was elected, and succeeded her sister. The holiest union reigned between these two sisters; God seemed to have created them to help each other. In their early youth their characters seemed to have been diametrically opposite. Sister M. of the Passion was lively and full of good humor, Mary of Saint Cecelia grave and serious. If they were doing the same work the elder sought to hurry up the younger, and the younger sister tried to moderate the quickness of her elder, saying to her with Saint Francis de Sales: "Hurrying is good for nothing; little and well."

The government of Mother M. of Saint Cecelia was not the continuation of the preceding. The patience of this good Mother was very great. However, she was exposed to the loss of it if she heard of any one failing in charity for the neighbor, which was her favorite virtue. She incessantly repeated that the neighbor was like the ark of alliance, which any one was forbidden to touch under pain of death. Besides, if the duty of the superiority obliged her to correct the faults that came to her knowledge she should not hold an inquisition to find out what had been forgotten.

Notwithstanding her well-known goodness her presence inspired more of fear than affection. This made her feel much sorrow. One day a Sister said laughingly: "What a pity it is that what is really beautiful breeds doubt and fear." The Mother replied: "Alas, my God, what foolish pleasure! It is a fault of self-love to strive to make oneself esteemed and loved; it is an extravagance which places oneself, by pride, in the rank of ferocious beasts who tremble and flee before people." It was sufficient for any one to open her heart to this good Mother to gain her affection. All were assured of her discretion; her constant maxim was that a secret was a precious and sacred deposit, which ought to remain only in the power of the one who gave it.

At the expiration of the second superiority Mother M. of the Passion fell ill. The prayers of the Community and the generous sacrifice of a Sister who had offered her life to save that of Mother seemed to have been heard, for she recovered. She was elected for the fifth time in 1732. Sister M. of Saint Cecelia, although very fatigued, was charged with the direction of the novitiate. Full of new ardor she wished, she said, to repair the faults she had committed previously. God was satisfied with her goodwill, for He soon called her home to receive her crown.

On her bed of death this Sister said: "Oh, how well we understand in our last moments the price of sufferings! I assure you that in the state I am at present I find my only consolation in the thought of the sufferings, which by the grace of God, I have borne all my life. It is true that I have endured them with but common virtue, but what should it be now if I had not even that resource?" In those last days of her life God cast out the fear from her heart that she had always had of His judgments; she slept sweetly in the Lord, like a victim resigned to the sacrifice, on December 20, 1733, aged fifty-four years, and forty-one years of religion.

Mother M. of the Passion assisted her beloved sister during her last illness, but the fatigues of her self-imposed task and the sorrow she felt renewed her own infirmities. It became visible that God was about to demand of the Community a second and a harder sacrifice. This fervent Religious had been preparing herself for death for quite a long time, and to this end she had prepared herself during her last retreat. She was wont to say that in sickness the weakness of the body hindered the soul from doing its utmost for that mighty flight of the latter to the realms of the great unknown, and it would be a great misfortune if at that moment there were any quarrels with one's conscience.

On February 13, 1734, she was seized with an alarming fever, which did not admit of a doubt that she was nearing her end. She said to the Sister Infirmarian: "Sister, my illness will last five weeks in honor of the five wounds of our Lord. I have requested of Him to grant me this little satisfaction and this slight resemblance of Him before I appear before His dread tribunal." Her prediction was realized. During this time, heedless of her sufferings, her soul was ever united with God.

After the reception of the Last Sacraments she made some recommendations to the Sisters, that were too remarkable not to have been preserved. She commenced by thanking them for the care with which they had surrounded her, and asked of them, as a last proof of their affection, one year's exactitude to their Rules. Her heart furnished her with expressions that were both touching and pressing to urge them to perseverance in all that was prescribed them. She earnestly insisted on silence, which is the guardian of the religious life; then she said: "You need not look elsewhere for a superior; you have several good subjects ready and able to fulfill this charge. If you esteem each other, and render yourselves proper justice, you will see that I speak truly. But do not commit the fault that you committed in regard to my sister and myself, in leaving the government too long in the same hands; form subjects for the important charges." One of the Sisters asked her to make known the person whom she thought proper to succeed her. She refused, saying: "No, Sister; when God closes my eyes He will open yours." She added then, to sweeten the pain of her daughters: "When I shall be no more the Consoler will come." Her last words were to maintain peace among themselves, and mutual charity, which she had succeeded in reestablishing.

She slept the sleep of the just on February 17, 1734. She was fifty-six years old and in religion forty-one years.

The public believed that these two Mothers could not be replaced. The pious deceased was the best judge of the Community.

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CHAPTER V

SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENT OF THE MOTHERS M. OF THE ASSUMPTION LE DEMOUR DE KERNILIEN AND M.. ANNE OF JESUS BOSSINOT DE LA BREHAUDAIS, 1734-1761

AFTER the death of Mother M. of the Passion the Community was governed during twenty-seven years by the Mothers le Demour and Bossinot, both of whom, although entirely different in character, wisely and piously conducted the Community in the ways of perfection.

Sister le Demour had received a very worldly education from her mother. Proud of all the natural advantages with which her daughter was blessed this lady sought only how she could increase her beauty, and thus make her shine in society, to which she had, by virtue of her wealth and prominence, an easy access; she also held brilliant gatherings in her mansion to attract her friends. The child's confessor obliged her, for penance, to ask her mother's permission to pass at least a year in a convent, there to study out the designs of God upon her. Her worldly mother would not hear of such a thing. Hide her beautiful daughter in a convent! No, indeed. But God's ways are wonderful; He will not be mocked. Not long after God called Mme. de Kernilien to Himself. She was stricken with death as she was leaving the table, where she had been playing cards, a pastime for which she had a lively passion. In that supreme moment she had, however, time to recognize her wrong-doing and her refusal of her only daughter's wish; now she exhorted her to enter a monastery, when she would reach her fifteenth year. The taste for the world, fostered by her too-worldly mother, was too strong in this young girl, and she dryly replied to her mother: "I shall follow your example and your lessons."

Notwithstanding this apparent lightness of disposition her education was truly Christian, and serious thoughts soon grew from that arid soil so utterly unfit, apparently, to produce aught save the love of pleasure that her mother had inculcated therein. The Annalist did not fear to affirm that, thanks to her innocence, she passed through the greatest peril to her soul without having the least suspicion of evil. Mlle. le Demour, after her mother's death, entered the Academy of the Visitation of Rennes, and the atmosphere of piety that she breathed there in that sanctuary of refinement and learning very soon engendered the germ that produced the longing for the religious life in her young heart. On her return to Guingamp she made the acquaintance of Mother Moisan. It was an attraction for her, and the reputation of regularity that the monastery enjoyed made her decide to enter without further preliminaries.

When she was fourteen and a half years old she ran away from her governess, and went to the convent to ask for admission into the novitiate. The prayers and petitions of her family could not shake her resolution. One day when she was in the parlor Mother M. of Saint Catherine had a slight fear that she had a desire to go back to her home, so she spoke a few words to her to hinder her from going back, even for a time. The dear child replied with much energy: "Ah, Mother, I am well off away from the world; I know my weakness too well to wish to return, even for an hour. Notwithstanding the respect I have for your wise counsel, if you told me to leave I would resist you, as I did my cousin."

Mlle. le Demour resisted with less courage the trials of the novitiate. The person who examined her before her profession, seeing her so young and elegant looking, asked her: "Do you not love the world, my child, and why did you leave it at such an early age?" She replied with her ordinary vivacity: "I beg your pardon, Monsieur; it is because I loved it so well that I quitted it. I would have lost my soul had I stayed there."

Shortly after her profession she fell a victim to a strange illness, called by the Sister Annalist the opprobrium of medecine. During the space of ten years the ablest doctors could not cure her, nor even relieve her. It was evidently an acute gastritis that reduced her to extreme weakness. Pancakes of buckwheat or buckwheat rolls were the only articles of food she could digest.

In this state of weakness Sister M. of the Assumption gave a beautiful example of detachment from the good things of this life, and attachment to the religious enclosure. Bishop de Kervilio, who had loved her very tenderly from her infancy, and partly on account of this affection and to conserve her to the Community by restoring her to health, proposed to take her to his palace for a change of air and scene, thinking that it would be easier to have her treated. His Lordship promised to give her full liberty to live as retired as she wished, and dispensed her from the enclosure. The dear young Sister refused, and accompanied her refusal with such good and wise reasons that the prelate accepted her refusal kindly, and went away much edified.

After her health improved she took up the practice of all the observances with renewed ardor, and the Mothers le Goff, who had founded on her the greatest hopes, took care to have her employed successively in the principal charges. At the death of Mother of the Passion she was Assistant. In this capacity she notified Bishop de la Fruglaie de Kervers who, in 1731, had succeeded Bishop de Kervilio, and asked permission to proceed soon to a new election. This prelate had the same feeling of benevolence for the monastery as his predecessor. He reserved to himself the honor of presiding at the election, and finding, while he was in Paris, that it would be impossible for him to return soon he ordered Sister M. of the Annunciation, in whom he reposed the greatest confidence, to take up the government of the Community. This obedience put her in a very delicate and difficult situation. Her prudence and her wisdom showed the Community how well fitted she was to undertake this charge, and she was regularly elected on June 8, 1734.

Among the supernatural gifts which Mother M. of the Assumption made use of during her government we must place that of discernment of spirits. She employed this gift most usefully in the formation of the numerous novices that God sent her. This quality was so great that it might be termed a prophetic spirit. She often repeated to the young Sister M. Angelique le Gentil: "You should work strenuously, my daughter, for your own perfection; you will have to guide others some day." Shortly before her death, taking this young Sister's hand and kissing it, she repeated the same words. Some one then observed to her that it was not the Mother Superior she was talking to but Sister M. Angelique: "I know that very well," she said; "she is not now the Mother Superior, but she will be. I will not live to see it, but I wlll rejoice in the happiness of the Sisters."

This pious Superior made use of a great number of maxims to help her Sisters on in the ways of perfection; some of them have come down to us, such as: "The more we practice virtue and the spiritual exercises the more sweet they become." "The more we pray the more we will wish to pray." "The less we pray the less we wish to pray." "There are four *littles* and two *muches* which help on the road of perfection: 1, think little; 2, speak little; 3, know little; 4, desire little. . . . 1, love much; 2, do much." Thus, under her direction, generous souls made rapid progress.

The work of the Institute was very dear to her, and the Penitents often felt the effects of her zeal and maternal tenderness; but she ardently desired that the monastery would not have to keep lady boarders. The requirements of those ladies are often, it is true, a cause of many difficulties. The needs of the convent did not allow her to suppress this class, but she kept a firm hand over them, so as to make them observe the rules and regulations laid down for them. Notwithstanding this rigid manner of acting those ladies had more esteem for her than others. One of them, who was a pretty good judge of merit, said of her one day: "We have had several battles together; nevertheless, I love and fear her. She is a woman with a head on her shoulders; a fine superior, and a saint."

During her last triennial, from 1758 to 1761, her repugnance for those ladies became truly exaggerated, and caused many disagreements in the monastery. Broken down by age and infirmities Mother le Demour had not strength enough to accept a necessity that poverty had imposed on the house, and not understanding the best thing that can be done is sometimes the enemy of good, but since it could not be settled according to her views they did the next best thing.

At the time of her election the former Constitutions of 1670 were in use in the monastery. Mother Moisan had considered it her duty to continue them, as they were clothed with more dignity by having a surer approbation. With the permission of the Bishop of Treguier a new edition had been printed when, in 1734, an Assembly was convoked by Mother

Blouet to have them revised. This is the explanation of the tenacity with which Mother le Demour held on to them, and the reason why Bishop de Kervers would not permit otherwise. This Mother seems to have been obstinately attached to the ancient usages. However, at the first chapter that followed her reelection she declared her intention of observing the new Constitutions that had been introduced during her deposition. The approbation that these Constitutions had received from the Sovereign Pontiff and the prelates was for her the manifestation of the Divine Will.

Historic sincerity compels us to observe here that there had never existed perfect accord between Mother le Demour and Mother M. Anne of Jesus Bossinot de la Brehaudais, who succeeded her. This misunderstanding between these two Mothers was a sad trial. However, the Community did not suffer from this fault; both were virtuous enough to prevent that.

The election of 1740 placed Mother M. Anne Bossinot de la Brehaudais at the head of the Community. She was reelected five times, and died in charge in 1763. The study of her life shows her to have been a model superior. She was born at Saint Malo, and when she was about eight or nine years old she was placed, with her two older sisters, in the boarding school at Mont-Bariel. She endeared herself to her mistresses and companions by her charming ways and innocent candor. Her charity for the sick and her aptitude in caring for them seemed to be a natural qualification in her; the pupils used to call her the little doctor, not that she put on airs or wanted to appear knowledgeable, but on account of her surprising ability; it was a wonderful sight to see her washing infected sores, felons, etc.; sores of any kind were submitted to her care, and she invariably cured them.

The boarding school seems to have been well filled with pupils at that time, for it would seem that music lessons commenced at half past five o'clock every morning. Mlle. Bossinot in her anxiety to allow her companions more sleep offered herself for the first lesson, notwithstanding her own need of repose. These little traits, and a host of others, prove how well she knew how to overcome and sacrifice herself to give pleasure to others.

From the boarders class she passed to the novitiate, although she was not yet fifteen years old. Her sister, Mary of Saint Celestine, deemed this sudden step absurd, even an inexcusable presumption, and could hardly bear the thought of her young sister entering into any engagement of the kind. The fervent postulant bore this trial courageously, as well as all those imposed on her during her novitiate. Another of her sisters, seeing her so happy, thought it must be a good thing to serve a God Who could make one so happy, and resolved at once to also take up the yoke of the religious life. She was older in years; she took the habit when Sister M. Anne of Jesus was professed, and was called Mary of Saint Emmanuel.

After the profession of Sister M. Anne of Jesus she was given the position of aid in the boarding school, and was entrusted, especially, with the little ones ranging from five to six years. The care she gave to the pupils, when she was only a child herself, will give us an idea of the attention she gave her charges when she became their Mother. She also gave evidence of the talent she possessed in the discernment of character, and of her aptitude in guiding souls. When her pupils grew up they always remembered the lessons she gave them; they retained the seeds of that virtue which took such deep root in their young hearts.

But the real theater of her charity was the infirmary. Sister M. Anne of Jesus had charge of it for eight years; it would be more true to state that she fulfilled the charge all her life. Until her death she was the doctor of the Community. Her reputation outside spread far and near. The poor as well as the rich flocked to the parlor to consult her and receive her care. The alms that gratitude drew to the monastery helped in a great measure to pay for the improvements she made during her different terms of superiority.

Born in 1698 this Mother was forty-two years old at the time of her first election. It would seem that never having been employed in the constructions, nor as econome, she would not have much aptitude, but in that line of duty her sound practical common sense came to the rescue, and proved quite the contrary. The principal building of the monastery had been attended to, but no particular plan had been followed; hence, there were any number of inconveniences felt by the Community in the different employments, even in the choir and the sacristy. Mother Bossinot realized marvelous transformations which added greatly to the relief of the Sisters. She even went so far as to invent elevators, foreshadowing modern mechanism. As the plans were not ordinarily understood the means of realizing were not easily found, and great opposition was brought to bear against this innovation. When the work was finished the advantages were very evident—contradictions were changed into testimonials of gratitude and admiration. The Mother drew from the font of her charity the strength not to allow herself to be frightened by those first trials, and in her humility she did not magnify her attempts.

The great act of her second triennial was her acceptance of the new Constitutions. They were approved by the great Pope Benedict XIV. Mother Bossinot, desirous of peace and union, suffered from a kind of secession in the Institute. Her tact and prudence made her profit by the nomination of the Right Reverend Charles Guy le Borgne de Kermorvan, in 1745, to make this change. Strengthened by the authorization of this prelate she assembled the Chapter, showed the importance of the union between the different houses of the Institute, the necessity of sacrificing particular views to the general good, and to this end advised as the best means the destroying of the old Constitutions. Thus would all future discussions be prevented.

The old Constitutions and the old Custom-Books were formally burned; she distributed the new ones that she took care to have procured. The Community gladly received those books, and the Mother considered only how to observe these statutes. Her example, more than her words, animated the Sisters; it would be difficult to equal her exactitude in the observance of the practices either of the Custom-Book or the Constitutions. Her memory was at all times retentive, her desire of being faithful in everything served for proper instructions in what was necessary, but she would not have this study become long or painful.

In regard to the Community her conduct was an exact copy of that of her Divine Master with His disciples: the same goodness, the same support, the same indulgence, the same cares. Notwithstanding the multitude of affairs with which her mind was occupied every Sister thought she had particular care of her, for her maternal solicitude knew how to prevent all that could dissatisfy any one. She recommended the officers to give abundantly all that was necessary both of food and clothing. She distributed herself all the little *douceurs* that the superiors usually give themselves, and her affability and goodness added immensely to the price of the gift. At the approach of her depositions she carefully informed herself of the needs of the Sisters, in order to avoid any trouble to the new superioress. The maxim of a Religious of the Visitation had become a rule of her conduct: "A stingy Mother will never have daughters truly poor of heart." If any one represented to her that she ought to economize, the response of Saint Ambrose became hers, and she met such murmurs by saying: "I would far rather be accused of prodigality than stinginess. When a person asks for something it must be given without fearing that we cannot afford it. In recompense for our charity God will provide. I have always acted thus, and I shall always strive to satisfy every one."

Mother Mary Anne of Jesus showed her zeal in a special way for the Penitents. It was useless to represent to her the poverty of the house—the scarcity of provisions, where there was question of the salvation of souls. The desire of saving them did not limit itself in opening the doors of the house to them; she often visited those faltering sheep and spoke to them with such ineffable kindness and sweetness that the most refractory yielded to her influence. The care of their food did not escape her; she wanted it to be good, well prepared and tasty, especially for the sick. She watched over them when they were ill, and bestowed on them the most tender care; those poor children called her no other name except the "Good Mother."

Outside the monastery her alms caused admiration and astonishment. The poor, who were too ashamed to beg, and young orphans found in her resource in their needs. The sick claimed her care and attention, frequently receiving both nourishment and medicine; whatever was in her power she gave. If the monastery was not able to help, she had friends who contributed, and her influence over them constrained them to give ungrudgingly.

We have already seen that the general interests of the Institute were very dear to her heart. In her second superiority she gave a new proof of this by giving direct aid to the House of Paris. Her own sister, Sister M. of Saint Celestine Bossinot, told her how badly off she was there; Mother M. of Saint Anne sent three Religious to her at once. Her choice showed the purity of her intentions, as well as her disinterestedness. She sent her Sister Mary Angelique le Gentil, Sister M. of Saint Louis Georgelin and Sister M. of Saint John Baptist Ribartm, all very capable subjects, and well worthy of performing the tasks awaiting them in Paris. Leaving Guingamp on July 2, 1753, they arrived at their destination on the evening of the 14th. This journey required more days at that time than it takes in hours at the present day. The recital they gave of it was full of charming simplicity. It showed how they bore the fatigues and weariness of the way with becoming gaiety. At Rennes they had the consolation of seeing the Sisters, and were struck with the many inconveniences of that monastery. In Paris the situation was found to be as Mother M. of Saint Celestine had depicted it; they went to work immediately and rendered great services to this house.

Reelected in 1761 Mother Bossinot had the sorrow of seeing the superior of the monastery die at the chaplain's residence, where he had stopped after having presided at the election. Bishop de Kermoran, who constantly showed himself a devoted friend to the monastery, soon after followed him to the tomb. These repeated losses were felt very keenly by this good Mother, but they did not hinder her from continuing her activities with her ordinary ability. The last years of her life were signalized by great improvements and many repairs, and by the building of a chapel dedicated to the Patriarch of the Order, Saint Augustine, all being done with a view to redouble her zeal for the work of her fourth vow. Notwithstanding the inconvenience caused by the many repairs she received all the Penitents that presented themselves. They were quite numerous at that time. Divided into two classes they numbered over sixty.

The boarding school was flourishing. In a letter, dated 1764, the Sisters mentioned: "There is a good attendance at the boarding school; our Community is so renowned for the education of children that pupils come here even from the New World. We had five young children from Mexico—all sisters;

and another from Cadez in Spain." The same letter gives the number of sixty, which even today would seem considerable for a boarding school in a small town.

Upon his arrival in his diocese Bishop de Cheylus was eager to give the retreat exercises to all the Communities. The idea of retreats was not so general at that time as it is today; the method was then more complicated, and the preachers less used to give them. In 1763 the Capuchin Fathers commenced giving these pious exercises at Mont-Bariel on the first Sunday of Lent, and lasted during the greater part of the holy season.

Those retreats prepared the Community for the sacrifice that God was soon to demand of them. Mother M. of Saint Anne had had one attack of paralysis a year after her election. She recovered gradually from this first attack, and took up her usual work; on September 20, 1763, she had another attack, which deprived her of speech; she was not able to receive the Holy Viaticum. This privation was very sensibly felt. Among the half intelligible words she endeavored to pronounce she was often heard to say: "I only wish for my God." But on account of the impossibility of swallowing she was deprived at that supreme moment of her only consolation. She could not receive her God. On September 30th her soul went to be united to its Creator. She was in her sixty-fourth year.

Since the notice of Sister M. of Saint Theresa Allain we have not spoken of the numerous Sisters that died in the monastery. Several of their lives offer examples of virtue. The Annals of 1759 mention the death of Sister M. of Saint Gertrude Padelt, and say that she had had many extraordinary communications with our Lord. One recalls that of the Blessed Margaret Mary. Sister M. of Saint Gertrude was in her cell one day reading a pious book when, notwithstanding her resistance, the feeling that she was actually in the presence of God came over her with such force that she fell on her knees to adore Him. Then an extraordinary light showed her the sins of her whole life, their greatness and their gravity. Full of terror, and at the same time full of confidence, she cried out: "Oh, Lord, if it pleases Your Divine mercy to pardon my sins I shall commence a new life, and I shall perform great penance for them."

Our Lord presented himself before her, and taking her hand placed it on His Divine Heart, saying to her with an incomprehensible love: "What, my daughter, could He Who suffered this open wound refuse to pardon you?"

A short time before her death she heard this same voice say to her: "Prepare thyself to die by love, and to love by death." These words are a summary of her life, entirely consecrated to divine love. Being remarkably poetic she sang of love, and was rendered worthy of love by her wonderful candor.

CHAPTER VI

SUPERIORITY OF MOTHER M. OF SAINT THERESA FOUQUET, FROM 1763 TO 1770—FIRST SUPERIORITY OF MOTHER M. OF THE HEART OF JESUS LE GENTIL, 1770 TO 1776

SHORTLY after the death of Mother Bossinot, her Assistant and charitable infirmarian in her long illness, was chosen to succeed her. This Sister belonged to a rich family of Saint-Malo. Educated in the boarding school she entered the novitiate from there, and took the habit when she was sixteen years old. She passed through all the different employments, and was fifty-one years old when she was placed at the head of the Community. Her government was a continuation of the preceding. The work that had been begun was finished, particularly the work done on the Sisters' choir.

On this occasion an act of devotion towards our Lady and of charity towards a poor Penitent was wonderfully recompensed. On the eve of the feast of the Annunciation, 1764, a poor girl, bright and intelligent-looking, asked to be received; this charity was done gratuitously. They quickly discovered all kinds of talents in this girl, and of course she made herself generally useful. Among other things she undertook to do was to clean the pictures hanging in the church, and she succeeded remarkably well. But then the Community noticed that the beams were showing evident signs of decay, and serious accidents might occur if they were not attended to; so it was decided that the roof would have to be repaired.

In 1766 Bishop de Cheylus was transferred to the Bishopric of Cahors, and was replaced the same year by Right Reverend M. de la Royere. This prelate presided at the reelection of Mother Fouquet in 1767. Being a good judge of the religious and interior spirit he conceived the highest esteem of the Sisters of Mont-Bariel. Following the common usages of his predecessors he went to the monastery when he was at Guingamp, and always wanted to see the Sisters.

At this time the death of the confessor was a great trial to the Community. The Annals often mention the small number of priests in the diocese of Treguier. It was astonishing in a diocese where the population was so deeply Christian; it showed that the seminaries were not well organized and, perhaps, the evil doctrines of the day had something to do with it. Even the Community felt it; vocations gradually diminished in numbers, and they were compelled to recall the two Sisters they had sent to Paris, Sisters M. Angelique le Gentil and Saint Louis Georgelin.

In 1770 the monastery experienced a great joy: Bishop de la Royere came to the monastery to celebrate a Pontifical Mass on the feast of the Holy Heart of Mary. The Sisters rejoiced that this solemn occasion would reanimate this devotion among the laity. The concourse of people was remarkable in the number and social standing of the congregation on that occasion. In reparation for all the blasphemies and outrages committed throughout France the Sisters made special devotions every Friday to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. They associated themselves to the reparation that was offered in Caen and elsewhere.

This joy was followed by a peculiarly severe trial. An epidemic spread among the Sisters, and kept a number with a high fever in bed for more than twenty days at a time. The doctor could not diagnose the disease, so another report was spread through the town that the pestilence was in Mont-Bariel. The parents and relatives of the children hastily took their children away. However, only one of them was attacked; the Penitents were entirely preserved.

The deposition of Mother Fouquet took place that same year, but she survived only a few months; she had been suffering from cancer for twenty years. In the midst of this long trial she rendered innumerable services to the monastery, and continually observed the most perfect regularity. Feeling her end approaching she asked for the Last Sacraments, and expired on June 14, 1771, at the moment when the priest had finished applying to her the Last Indulgence.

Bishop de la Royere presided at the election; the deposed Mother, herself, rendered the following account of the Monastery of Tours:

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be forever praised and adored for the grace that He has given us in granting us a Mother who bears His name, and who has been gifted with

His qualities: goodness, affability, religious spirit—in a word, all that we can desire.

The day that this good Savior bestowed this gift on us makes us appreciate it all the more, for it was on the first Friday of the month that our election took place, the Bishop not being able to come on the day fixed by the Rule. We also gave him much consolation in seeing our suffrages given to this worthy subject, the second of our three Sisters le Gentil. This dear Mother discharged all the different employments, and she was loved in every place.

You may well believe that our joy is universal, both inside the house and in the town. The union between the superiors and the deposed, so much recommended, will not be difficult with us. It shall only be a continuation of that which has existed between us up to the present. We are united by the bonds of friendship and religion, as well as by the ties of blood. She is my cousin german, and we lived together since our First Communion, which we made together; we entered the house and the novitiate together, took the habit and made our profession the same day. She has borne the weight of the government with me in capacity of Assistant during my superiority, and rendered me services for which I can never be grateful enough, and always with a humility, a charity and a friendship that has sweetened the burden; I could remain quiet during my many infirmities.

The new Mother was, then, from Saint-Malo, like her predecessors; she was fifty-eight years old, but had splendid health, and able to assist at all the exercises. Her character was sweet, lively and amiable. She had a splendid education, and was a brilliant writer. She had a most retentive memory, and was a noted conversationalist; her exhortations were eagerly looked forward to.

It was the time when the Jubilee had been granted by Clement XIV after his accession to the Pontifical throne. Bishop de la Royere put himself at the head of the priests who preached those holy exercises; they gave many instructions to the Community and Penitents. To the Sisters the Rule of the Penitents was commented on; the article on meditation appeared to him the most important, and he wished to regulate the form of it; he desired that the mistresses would make it in a loud voice, as it is practised in retreats. It was easy to make him understand how onerous this exercise would become in time to the Sisters, while it might be impossible for others. Then it was agreed that the subject matter of the meditation would be read over twice, and at the conclusion they would make acts of the spiritual exercise. The Penitents drew much profit, and it was found out, as his Lordship had said, that they were more capable of meditating than was generally thought. It was according to the counsels of the prelate that the mistresses would themselves prepare them to receive the full fruits of the Jubilee. The need of priests and the impossibility of getting preachers to give them sermons necessitated this.

Now it was that the monastery could realize the desire, formed for a long time, of giving up receiving lady boarders; they only kept from this time on those sent or placed there by order of the King.

Shortly after her reelection, in 1773, Mother M. of the Heart of Jesus had the sorrow to lose Bishop de la Royere, who was transferred to the Bishopric of Castres. This change occasioned great regret to the Community. This good prelate bestowed benefits of all kinds, and had founded there two places for Penitents. Before quitting his See he wished to form with the house an association of prayers and good works. Death also deprived the monastery of the mother of the superioress and her two sisters. In their financial embarrassments, which were frequent at that period, Mme. le Gentil was the usual resource of the Sister Econome; her gifts could not be counted.

The successor to Bishop de la Royere, Right Reverend M. Fretat de Sarra, soon after taking possession of his See, undertook to make the canonical Visitation to the Communities of his diocese, and commenced with that of Mont-Bariel. He was happy to find the Rule so well observed, obedience respected and poverty practiced. On their part the Sisters founded the greatest hopes on the goodness of the Bishop when, less than two years after, he was transferred to Nantes. It was not only the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity that regretted his departure; his alms and his goodness had gained him the hearts of the people.

Bishop de Lubersac, chaplain to Madame Sophie, aunt of Louis XVI, then took possession of the See of Treguier. His chaplaincy to this princess obliged him to pass at least six months in Paris. It was easy to foresee that he would not occupy this See very long, lost, as it were, in the depths of Brittany. These constant changes of Bishops were too frequent to be anything but prejudicial to the diocese, and caused much embarrassment to the monastery, which ordinarily, received them during their sojourn in Guingamp.

Some months before her deposition, January 1, 1776, Mother M. of the Heart of Jesus closed the eyes of the respected Sister M. of the Assumption le Demour. For thirty-two years she was either superior or mistress of novices. She occupied the post of directress of the novitiate at the age of seventy-nine years, up to three months before her holy death. When she was, by her own eager petitions, disencumbered of her office, she gave herself up to the delights of the hidden life, and all the exercises of humility.

It was only a month before her death that she consented to take up her residence in the infirmary. On entering it she said to the infirmarian, who had been her novice: "My child, I place myself in your hands; dispose of me as you will." Her conduct proved that she knew how to practice the maxim she had taught to others:

God His saints do not recognize
By pampered deeds from each;
He wants the work of able hands,
And not their idle speech.

This good Mother never asked for anything, and when others were thoughtful enough to understand and foresee her needs she would say: "Oh, how good God is! I wanted that so much, and now He sent it to me."

After she entered the infirmary, her health became worse, and her weakness foreboded approaching dissolution. She received the Last Sacraments with sentiments of the most lively faith and profound humility. Her greatest happiness was in the reception of Holy Communion oftener than it was customary in those days. The chaplain consented to bring it at midnight on New Year's. This promise overwhelmed her with joy. Several times during the night she asked with holy impatience what time it was. About eleven o'clock her weakness made those about her fear she would not be able to communicate; they told her so. She replied: "It is true I am very ill, but I can receive my God. Yes, yes, I can." She received, and the effects of this august Sacrament appeared reflected on her countenance.

During the day she united herself to the prayers that were being said around her bed. Aspirations such as: *Os-*

tende nobis faciem tuam, came frequently to her lips. She yielded up her soul to her Creator about three-thirty in the afternoon, without any one perceiving that she really had breathed her last. Her lips remained the color of vermillion; so beautiful did she seem in death that it was difficult to believe that she was really dead. When the remains were exposed in the choir many persons came to see her; they venerated her as a saint.

Sister M. of Saint Charles le Demour survived her only thirteen days; her death renewed the grief of the Sisters.

Material losses coming from the reduction of rents, joined to these trials, gave the Community much cause for grief. Sending away the lady boarders made the Community, in the eyes of the world, appear affluent. They did not understand that only the love of regularity made this step imperative, and which would now be observed. In the midst of these trials the end of the superiority of Mother M. of the Heart of Jesus came to ease her of her burdens.

CHAPTER VII

SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENTS OF MOTHERS MARY ANGELIQUE AND M. OF THE HEART OF JESUS LE GENTIL, 1776 TO 1792—SUPPRESSION OF THE MONASTERY

THE three sisters le Gentil are now pretty well known to the reader. The second has been under observation for some time, and, therefore, better known than her sisters. The eldest, Sister M. of the Angel Guardian, had a very pronounced talent for the direction of the temporals; she was nearly always in charge. The youngest, Sister M. Angelique, united in herself the talents and virtues of her two elder sisters, and other qualities joined thereto, made her an accomplished superior.

She succeeded her sister. Her letters and several chapters which she held show that her education was thorough, and goes to prove that education as carried on at that time in Mont-Bariel was truly distinguished for the care bestowed upon the pupils. After her profession she was employed in the boarding school, so as to communicate to others what she had so abundantly received. In 1753 Mother Bossinot sent her to Saint Michael of Paris, and although she was only twenty years old she was Assistant and directress.

One of her first cares after her election was to prepare for the centennial celebration of the foundation of the monasastery. It took place on November 21st. The dearth of priests, and the difficulty with which the Bishop of Treguier granted the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, did not permit Mother Angelique to give to that feast all the solemnity she desired. The Pope granted a plenary indulgence without any difficulty. It was extended to all the faithful who would visit the chapel, and prolonged it for seven years' time up to the appointed day. The Prior of the Dominicans gave the sermon, and remained there to show the excellence of the Institute. The eulogy he paid to the memory of our Blessed Father was very remarkable; he dwelt a long time on the merit of the first Mothers and on the obligation the Religious then present were under of walking in their footsteps. The choir illumination was gorgeous, the sanctuary was a gem of artistic taste.

After this feast the time of Mother Mary Angelique's superiority did not offer any very striking features. In 1777 the fall of the enclosure wall, occasioned by a terrific storm, was a source of much annoyance, as the cloister was violated thereby. In this circumstance the deeply religious feeling of the people, and their high esteem of the Sisters, made them offer shelter from serious vexations.

At that same date a Penitent died without showing certain signs of repentance, which caused the Sisters much pain. We were delighted to read in detail the prayers and mortifications the Sisters imposed upon themselves on these sad occasions. This fact proves to us the zeal that consumed them for their fourth vow, and how anxious they were that not one of those committed to their care by their Heavenly Father would be lost. This Penitent was interred in the enclosure. For twenty-five years this right had been refused the Sisters by the parish. This sad death was an eloquent sermon in itself for the companions of the poor unfortunate. Fearing a similar death many of them reentered into themselves, and God knew how to draw good out of evil.

The Community was exposed to great worries and annoyances in 1779, on account of the passing of the troops. The war with England necessitated the presence of the soldiers in Guingamp. Several Communities were obliged to lodge them; others went into their buildings and used them at will; even their churches were requisitioned as store houses for provisions. Some of them took possession of the boarding school, and others were lodged in the Penitents' quarters; they even took possession of the chapel. Several times Mont-Bariel had fears it would be subjected to the same trials. Bishop le Mintier, who had just been nominated to the Bishopric of Treguier, supported the claims of Mother Angelique, and the monastery was preserved from further annoyance.

The Annals, speaking of the works undertaken in the monastery, often mention the intelligent and active part taken by a good domestic. This faithful servant had been many years in the service of the convent, and died there piously in 1782. It was with unfeigned pleasure that we read the testimonial of gratitude the Sisters paid to this humble servant.

We shall relate also the death of another, Marie Nicolas, who served the Community for twenty-five years out of pure attachment, and out of no personal interest. In numberless instances the virtue of this servant amounted to heroism. She gave proof of her unalterable patience in supporting a horrible cancer that ate its way through her poor body. At the moment of her death she could well say, what was later ratified by all the Sisters: "I have rendered my service in all justice to my God, and I shall not be abandoned by Him in death." One day she said in all simplicity, concerning the care that was given her. "When I die there will not be any one sick in the infirmary; I will take all the sickness away with me." Truly, after her decease, which occurred in 1787, no one died for a long time, save one Sister who had been paralyzed.

The history of this humble girl furnishes us with an important lesson on the labor of the Penitents. Marie Nicolas was acting as forewoman of the weaving department. Needlework was so poorly paid for that, following the example of the Sisters of Guingamp, they installed some other industry in the houses.

The state of the novitiate at the end of the superiority of Mother Mary Angelique is perhaps the best proof of the wisdom of her government. It was composed of fifteen novices or postulants, and at a time, too, when all the Communities were complaining of a dearth of vocations. The Convent of Our Lady of Charity was criticized for forestalling them. People of the world said that Mont-Bariel was the fashion of the times. Meaning of course that young girls only thought of entering there. Its regularity and fervor merited this reputation. May all our monasteries deserve this reputation; it is priceless.

In 1782 Mother M. of the Heart of Jesus took up the reins of government. Soon after her election she had retreats given to all the classes by a holy priest, who joined to the labors of a missionary those of parish work. The Sisters made great use of such fortunate occurrences. They said: "God has established us in this country as on the mountain of Gelboe. Ordinarily speaking, one cannot find here spiritual succor, even in regard to confessors. Now we are enjoying spirituality in abundance."

They had four changes among their confessors in a short time. Bishop de Mintier, successor to Bishop de Lubersac, having been transferred to Chartres, they said to him in a jocular way: "These changes do you much honor, since the title of director at Mont-Bariel seems to be the forerunner of higher dignity."

The classes of Penitents were cruelly tried in the year 1784 by anaemia. Four deaths followed in quick succession; three were very edifying. One had spent forty years in the house; she had been brought to the monastery because, like many others, she had been addicted to drink. Her subsequent piety and gratitude rendered her the edification of her companions. This defect is, alas, but too common in Brittany, and one that is very difficult to overcome. We can see by this example how grace triumphs when allied with determination.

The mistresses succumbed to the fatigues caused by this disease, and being victims to their devotedness their own lives were endangered.

However, a new trial awaited the Sisters. The good, yet weak, Louis XVI was beginning to allow himself to be ruled by his ministers who, little by little, prepared the way for the Revolution. Instead of watching over Masonic lodges, where they were treating of the death of the King and fomenting the troubles that would end in the destruction of the French monarchy, he was inveigled into having a severe and utterly ridiculous inspection of convents carried out.

That year the civil authorities of Guingamp called for the first time to interrogate the Penitents concerning the motives of their detention. The sub-delegate of the district spent a whole day making his inquiries. He went away astonished at not having heard one word of complaint against the house. Owing to that visit he obliged five to leave, about whom the police had given him some secret knowledge. One young lady from Normandy, who was deeply imbued with the Jansenistic principles, after having spent five years in the convent, could not decide to make her Easter Communion before leaving.

Bishop le Mintier, although in the country, gave less sensible proofs of his interest to the Community than his predecessors; his life was very retired; he went around very little, being occupied principally with the formation of his clergy. According to the history given by the Sisters this period certainly was the most direful. In 1785 this prelate took much pleasure in presiding at an election. Mother Mary Angelique was elected. God seemed to have chosen her to direct the Sisters in the difficult times upon which they were so soon to enter. At the commencement of her new government she saw the Community go through a hard struggle in regard to sickness and death; she was also attacked, and her illness gave great disquietude to the Sisters. To console the Community for the many losses sustained several fervent novices joined the ranks. The Community letters are full of admiration concerning these young Sisters; their courage in the midst of revolutionary terrors, and their attachment to the religious life proved that they merited those eulogiums.

Those years were very hard for poor France. The rigor of the winter season, the drought and the famine were the causes of intense sufferings, and the sowers of the seed of the Revolution reaped a rich harvest, arriving at their ends more dexterously. Mont-Bariel had its own part in those calamities. The little town of Guingamp, ordinarily so tranquil, seemed already (1786) to be the hotbed of revolution. A husband, for just reasons and after going through all the legal formalities, placed his wife in the convent. The companions of this unfortunate woman came in a crowd to claim her, and made a great tumult. The parlors were invaded; they flung filth of every description into them, smashed the furniture, and the poor man had to take flight when he saw his life in danger. The monastery resembled a besieged city.

It was at imminent risk that a domestic hastened to call the police. These disorders lasted two hours. The woman, on account of whom all the trouble was made, was taken away by her husband. The letter that recounted the incident continues:

> Our Blessed institutor wished that all our faculties of body and soul should be employed in the service of our Penitents; we believe that in his heavenly home he prays that we be furnished with material to exercise our zeal, especially in regard to persons addicted to the curse of drink. . . . The edifying life and death of those who remain a certain time in the house indemnify us largely for the worries and embarrassment occasioned by others.
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> In September one of those women who had lived with us for forty years died a most edifying death in the exact performance of her rules. There could be nothing more consoling than her last moments. She was taken off after an illness of only five days. It was a great loss for us, on account of the services she rendered by skill in laundry work. She possessed

a fine spirit of economy, and was very zealous for the interests of the Community; she had also a spirit of piety and the fear of God.

A fire, brought on by a defective chimney, was a serious disaster, and imperiled the monastery in the year 1786. The esteem the Sisters enjoyed was shown on that occasion. The sub-delegate and all the gentlemen from the Hotel-de-Ville were quickly on the scene, and the first to give a helping hand; with the fine tact and delicacy of true gentlemen they watched to see that no one would enter surreptitiously. The Sisters kept perfectly quiet during the trouble, only helping when they were required to do so. The Annalist relates an amusing incident regarding the younger people; it seemed the event amused some of them, especially when the danger had passed; they said one to another: "We could hardly scold, or hear any one scolding in the midst of that hub-bub." However, every one did her duty gallantly, then returned to her post.

"The feast of the Divine Heart of Jesus (October 20, 1786) was solemnized among us," say the Sisters, "with grateful joy. We were honored with a visit from two of our Eudist Fathers from Rennes. One officiated and the other preached. We imagined we saw and heard our Blessed institutor animating us, himself, to love this beautiful devotion that was so dear to him. One of them, Reverend Father le Fevre, remained until All-Saints, and gave a retreat to our boarders. It was a rare thing for us to see some member of this Congregation, so we made a great feast of the occurrence."

The decrees of 1788, regarding the houses receiving Penitents, were sadly felt in the House of Guingamp, as well as in all the houses of the Institute. Mother Mary Angelique was twice obliged to sign her submission to the orders of the Court. She showed so much wisdom and moderation in the midst of those contradictions that the commissaries admired her and were extremely edified. Owing to those unfortunate decrees the visits of the official became wearyingly frequent. He made use of all the diplomacy in his power to win some one to his side, but no one was misled by his policy, and the results of his visits had no satisfaction for him. One day he was conducted to the apartments of the Penitents, and after examining their food he asked to see them individually in the parlor, took their names and surnames, and left without stating his purpose.

After he had given in his report the steward ordered seventeen girls to be set at liberty immediately. This order was transmitted to the superioress on the eve of the Holy Heart of Mary. She was deeply afflicted. "Alas," said she, "must everything conspire to destroy us on the very day on which we were established?" The steward consented, however, to suspend sentence until next day, but he spoke in the town about it, and the following day there was a crowd before the monastery; people came even from the country to enjoy the novel spectacle. This more or less benevolent public was a trifle disappointed in the hope of seeing something worth while; the display was not quite what it had promised, for only seven Penitents consented to leave the Refuge. Thus was it always—whenever the decree was put into force few of the willing or unwilling Penitents accepted their release.

They related the questions asked by the official. He wanted to know why they were sent there, and the motive of their entrance if they came there voluntarily. Nearly all had the same reply: "If my confessor knows all about it there should be no necessity to acknowledge it to others." One woman had just come in. The official interrogated her, asking if she wished to go out. She replied: "Eh! What are you talking about, sir. I'm hardly in, and now you want to know if I want to go out! No; by my faith, I do not want to go out." "I suppose it is on account of your bad conduct," he added, "and you are here for such and such a thing." "Is that all you know about it?" she said. "There are lots more besides that." And she turned her back to him and walked away. Having left the Refuge some time afterwards she fell back into her old vices, drank all she could possibly procure, and then paid a visit to the sub-delegate, a visit, needless to say, that was anything but polite; the result was that in quick order she found herself the inmate of a prison in Rennes.

These vexatious inquisitions, and several others of a similar nature, struck terror in all hearts, but the trouble-raisers themselves rejoiced, and a goodly number of persons, less clear-sighted, were enthusiastic over the wonders the new regime would bring to France. They had public rejoicings in Guingamp, in testimony of the adhesion of every one to the decree. But in most hearts fear was uppermost—joy and enthusiasm were far from being spontaneous. The promoters gave the children of the poor plenty of money, to encourage them to cry out: "Long live the King! Long live Parliament! Down with the Bailiwick!" This last word had not much signification to those poor little innocents; it deceived them. The real significance was: "Down with marriage "

These queer scenes prepared the greatest tragedies of the Revolution. They proved how incapable were the people of acquiring experience. It is over one hundred years since those evil days, and do we not see around us the same evil tendency, the same infamous way of acting?

After the Ascension, 1788, Mother Mary Angelique was unanimously reelected. She was the only one that was sad, for she foresaw only too distinctly the responsibilities that lay before her; like an awful incubus there weighed upon her soul the realties of the approaching trials. Notwithstanding the great reduction in the number of Penitents and boarders there was at that time about thirty-six persons in the house. It was her bounden duty to conduct them wisely during the perils of the country.

On February 13, 1790, the National Assembly voted the suppression of all religious Orders and the monastic vows, and declared all their goods, as well as those of the clergy, the property of the Nation. Those decrees were not immediately communicated and applied to the Sisters in Guingamp. During the first month of 1791 the novices had the courage to offer their sacrifice to the Lord. In May of that year an election was not possible; Mother Mary Angelique continued her charge.

The episcopal administration was disorganized by the civil constitution for the clergy. The decree of November 27, 1790, declared that the Bishops and the parish priests who would not take the oath were regarded as stripped of their functional dignities. Bishop le Mintier showed himself firm, and fully decided to be true to the Church. Betrayed before the National Assembly by a letter wherein he spoke of the evils of the country, he defended himself with calm dignity, saying fearlessly to his judges: "If our goods are taken today, probably they will take yours tomorrow." Obliged to fly one day, when disturbance was rife, he hid himself for a time in the chateau of the Bois-Riou; then emigrated to Jersey, and finally landed in England, where he died in 1801.

The confessor of the Community was, on the contrary, a weak man. He said one day to the Sisters: "If you hear that I have taken the oath do not follow my example." He did, indeed, give this bad example, and ceased his functions in the convent forthwith. Later on he retracted; but even so, he never could regain the esteem of the public, which he had completely lost.

The emigration of the Bishop and a great number of priests, the defection of their chaplain, and other trials, made the Sisters understand the greatness of their peril; however, it did not make them quit their holy asylum. The most painful cross of all was that they were compelled to remain ten months without being able to hear Mass or approach the Sacraments. "However," they said later, "God sustained us interiorly by His grace; He made such a great change in our souls that we could not offend Him. We were quite calm and totally abandoned to the Will of God. Every day we felt our love for Holy Church increase within us, and we all preferred death than to take the oath. Union reigned in our midst and we had no sickness during those ten months." After this long privation, the Sisters had a priest secretly enter the monastery every day, and they had the inestimable happiness of approaching the Sacraments. But this enjoyment was mixed with alarms. Domiciliary visits became more frequent after the year of 1791. The agents of the Republic arrived when least expected, and then they used the finest diplomacy to show that what they sought they sought as gentlemen and friends, and they allowed, too, that they wanted to oversee the household. Sister M. of Saint Pelagia, second econome, excelled in the housekeeping department. She had the hardihood to beguile the citizen visitors, and brought them to the same place by different ways. One day their gluttony was tempted, and their eyes and teeth sharpened at the sight of a fine inhabitant of the poultry-yard, but Sister deceived them skilfully. She saw that they disappeared promptly, and had splendidly-prepared answers to elude their questions concerning the fine poultry.

One of the first annoyances to those citizens was the Penitents. When offered their liberty, the agents were astonished when they refused it, preferring to remain in the house. They knew that one of them was confined in her cell, and was said to be demented: "That one, at least," they said, "will not refuse her liberty." What was their surprise when the poor girl looked at them with the look of a maniac, and only answered their proposals with insults, and even went so far as throw her shoe at the head of the one that made the proposition. He was terrified, and turning to the Sister said: "Shut the door quick, citizeness; she is all right there."

The superior, foreseeing an expulsion, sent to friends those articles that were of the greatest value. The most important papers were confided to a faithful domestic. But the agent, fearing, he knew not what, consigned them to the flames later on. Thus a quantity of the most important documents disappeared forever.

The revolutionary constables were well aware of the piety of the Sisters, and they knew that they would rather close their chapel than receive there a priest who had taken the oath, so they suspected that there was a faithful priest hidden away somewhere in the monastery. One day when they had the least suspicion of trickery they were made aware of a mighty crowd outside, clamoring vociferously for any hidden priest in the house. Sister M. of Saint Pelagia gave the preconcerted signal. But the poor priest, in his flight, forgot himself momentarily, and fled down the same stairs the inquisitors were ascending. He quickly turned about and hid behind the garret door, hoping God would decide for him. The leader of the band perceived him; he entered first, and placed himself before the open door, to search better, then gave the order to descend. In closing the door this brave man dared in the midst of rogues, to take the priest by the hand and said to him in a low voice: "You did fine." For the honor of humanity, it must be said those acts were not absolutely rare in those times of blood and carnage.

During the last visits the Sisters received those terrible inquisitors, ranged in the refectory, as for the *Benedicite*. This novel spectacle held these men in an attitude of respect. Cruel as they were there were moments when they appeared quite calm, but soon cupidity got the lead, and they gathered up the silver spoons with amazing rapidity. According to their views they were only giving back to the Republic what it owned, so it was in the name of the Republic that the Sisters were being robbed. Sister M. of Saint Pelagia, with her ordinary decision, put hers in her pocket, saying to them in a very dry but spirited way: "At least you owe me that much for the time I have spent in walking around with you."

That day those agents made an inventory of all the furniture in the house. The Sisters took care they did not profane some very cherished objects of devotion, which they are happy to possess still in the monastery. In going through the house the commissaries came to the infirmary, where they saw a Sister who was childish, and whose pious mania was to give every one her blessing; she included these citizens, and gave them her motherly blessing. They knew how to render justice to each other. One of them, turning to his neighbor, a sworn priest, said to him: "Her blessing will be good for you."

The next day the order arrived for them to evacuate the monastery within twenty-four hours. This order was handed to Mother Superior during recreation. She turned pale, but remained mistress of herself sufficiently to continue her conversation until the end of recreation, when she announced at the Obedience the sad news that the Community had to disband. Notwithstanding the long sufferings they had already borne this dispersion terrified them.

On October 2, 1792, the sorrowful separation took place. The Penitents were in tears, threw themselves on their knees and besought the aid and protection of their good Mothers; the Sisters bade them adieu with broken hearts. Mother Mary Angelique le Gentil raised their courage, and said: "One sight of God will console us more than all that we can suffer today."

The order of the Republic forbade their gathering together. The greater number of the Sisters returned to their families.

Two of them, the Sisters Ladvenant, had no family ties; by an excessive delicacy they did not wish to be an encumbrance on any one, and abandoning themselves to Divine Providence they walked to the city. They found shelter in a mill for the first night, passing the long hours on sacks of flour. Their miserable situation seemed like a bad dream. Later on they settled in Chatelaudren, taking care of the sick and instructing the children. But the need they were in obliged them to go to the country, hoping that there they would get some means of subsisting. The good inhabitants of Saint Martin surrounded them with affection, held them in great esteem, and provided for all their wants.

Shortly after the Sisters left the monastery the town authorities ordered it pillaged. The people of Guingamp gave in this circumstance a fine example of disinterestedness and respect for all that was consecrated to God. No one was allowed to penetrate the enclosure, and several months after everything was in the same condition as when the Religious were there. Sister M. of Saint Stanislaus and M. of Saint Euphrasia, having heard of this, disguised themselves as country women, and with baskets of butter on their arms, went through Guingamp. With the help of an old domestic, and favored by the wealthy people and society folk, they went through the convent so as to save all the furniture they could. What they did save is still to be seen in the monastery of Saint Brieuc.

The richest among the Sisters did not long enjoy the consolation of living with their families. Six months after their expulsion five of them were arrested at Quintin and three at Lannion. By the giving of some money these latter obtained the favor of being transferred to Quintin, and thus had the happiness of being united with their Sisters. The prison had really become a monastery; the Religious of the different Orders lived there, confronting death, or death confronting them, in such regularity that it was intensely edifying. The jailer saw them at meditation and heard them recite the Office without appearing in the least alarmed. He even became an accomplice to a grave violation of prison rules, which were rigorous at the time; he permitted a priest who had been detained to come to their apartment and say Mass for them at midnight, and give the consolations of religion to the souls so long deprived of those heavenly comforts. This brave priest, after having celebrated the Holy Mysteries, heard some noise, and disquieted, he cried out: "I am here. I have not told any one about the watchfulness of that rabble."

Sister M. of Saint Natalie was the object of a worse persecution than the others. One soldier got an order not to lose sight of her day or night; notwithstanding this severe order her guardians did not show themselves vulgar or uncivil to her.

Presently the Revolutionary Committee condemned to death all those persons detained in the Carmes of Quintin. July 27, 1794, was the day fixed for this murderous execution, and deep ditches were dug to receive the victims. All the Religious took the resolution of passing the last night in prayer, and it is easy to imagine their fervor in the certainty that death was awaiting them in the morning. In the little trait we mention we can see with what calm of soul they awaited the coming of their celestial Bridegroom. About eleven o'clock Sister M. of Saint Hyacinth said to her companions: "Sisters, continue to pray if you can; as for me, sleep prevents me from praying; I do not know what I am saying, so I must go to bed; I would rather die, Sisters, after sleeping than after having been awake: my mind will be more free to yield myself to the guillotine." And she retired.

Two hours had hardly passed by when the watchers heard below in the street confused noises and voices; the people all seemed to be crying out together: "The villain is killed! The villain is killed, himself." Fear and an awful foreboding possessed them, and hindered them from hearing the rest. They were under this painful impression when the jailer came to announce to them the end of the reign of terror—the tragic death of the cruel Robespierre, and, consequently, the order to open the doors of the prison. The Sisters went to bed and slept. Passing the bed of the Sister who had gone before they said to her: "Sister M. of Saint Hyacinth, get up." She rubbed her eyes, and answered quite calmly: "It is a nice morning to go to the guillotine." When the happy news was made known to her she lay back in her bed, but interrupted her sleep long enough to say: "He's dead? Thanks be to God!" In reading these simple recitals it is impossible not to see souls strengthened in that ineffable peace that Jesus Christ promised to His disciples—that peace that no tribulation could take from them.

We also find in the Annals of those sad days an act of maternal devotion—a mother sacrificing life for a child. Sister M. of Saint Theresa Eon, after the expulsion, retired to live with her old mother at Saint-Malo. To place her daughter in safety this lady sent her to the country. Some time after the assassins of the Revolution went to the house where the mother lived, expecting to see the daughter. Mme. Eon refused, and protested she would never let them get her. "Well," cried out those heartless men, "you shall die in her stead." The good mother accepted, was dragged away to prison, and soon after was guillotined. Overwhelmed with sorrow at this sad news Sister M. of Saint Theresa retired to Saint Quay, to be near Sister M. of Saint Scholastica. This fervent Religious had transformed her house into a monastery. A priest said Mass there every day, and that pious family communicated.

On Sundays this Sister supplied her inability of assisting at High Mass by singing the liturgical parts ordinary in the celebration of High Mass. This house became a flourishing school also. The children were formed to virtue within its walls, and the germs of the religious vocation were fostered there, and they became the first seedling of the Congregation that is so prosperous today.

At Quintin, as we have seen, the death of Robespierre liberated all those detained there during fifteen long months of captivity. Th Sisters made use of this unexpected benefit to reconstruct their Community. They rented a house, and opened two schools, one for children of the wealthy, and the other for the children of the poor, whom they fed and clothed if necessary. Thus the work of their fourth vow was not abandoned. Even during that terrible time the Sisters succeeded in drawing many from danger; others, whom they heard of as leading bad lives, they placed in good homes.

For a long time the Sisters flattered themselves with the hope of soon being able to return to their ancient monastery. They made many attempts, but did not succeed. God, in His infinite goodness, prepared for them another Mont-Bariel, which is more flourishing today than the first had ever been.

He wanted it to be established in a more populous center, where the works of Our Lady of Charity could and would develop more freely and usefully, and all things were managed so well that the Sisters could only be reconstituted in Saint-Brieuc.

FIFTH MONASTERY—VANNES

1683

CHAPTER I

FOUNDATION OF THIS MONASTERY IN 1683—M. DE KERLIVIO, REVEREND P. HUBY, MLLE. DE FRANCHEVILLE—THE FIRST SISTERS

TOWARDS the latter part of the seventeenth century three holy persons rivaled each other in works of zeal—spreading pious industries to sanctify the town and the diocese of Vannes and to aid the clergy and people already so deeply Christian. The foundation of a seminary and the establishments of retreats and missions were some of their most important works. It was to those holy persons that the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity owed in a great measure its existence.

M. Louis Eudo de Kerlivio was born in Hennebont, on November 14, 1621. After having studied at Rennes and Bordeaux he entered upon his duties in a world that he was well prepared to enter, and shone like a beacon light by his wonderful talents and richly-stored mind. He was very soon disillusioned; he cared not for its false hosannas, and entered the Seminary of the Bons-Enfants in Paris, where he placed himself under the direction of Saint Vincent de Paul, and made great progress in virtue. On his return to Hennebont, after his ordination about 1649, the care of the poor in the hospital became the principal object of his zeal; his house became their asylum. His own father, who had taken him for his confessor, said to him when he was dying: "My son, I have not made a formal will, but I am sure that all the goods I am leaving you will be given to the Church and the poor."

Never was a father's will better executed. M. de Kerlivio employed his fortune in founding a hospital in Hennebont, and later on a seminary in Vannes; then he was selected as Vicar-General to Bishop de Rosmadec in 1656.*

The Reverend P. Vincent Huby was also born in Hennebont on May 15, 1608. At the end of his humanities he entered the Society of Jesus, at Rennes. In 1642, while the Blessed Eudes was preaching his great mission of Rouen, Father Huby made his third year novitiate in that town. These two great servants of God were intimately united. The Blessed had already a decided personality, and was eagerly looked up to by those who once became acquainted with him. Out of respect for his former masters the zealous missionary used to go and see them whenever he could. The knowledge of the success of this great missionary filled the heart of Father Huby with the sacred fire of the apostolate. Those meetings are worthy of note, for the author of a notice on this holy Religious said: "He might have had the honor of outstripping, perhaps, Father Eudes and the blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, or of concurring with them, without knowing their design, or their project of honoring the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. . . . The practice that Father Huby had was to distribute gratuitously medals and medallions representing the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary."

In that which concerns the priority of the Sacred Hearts apostolate of Father Huby over the Blessed Eudes the author of this biography evidently committed an historic error. This good Father, after having fulfilled different functions in the houses of the Society of Jesus, only commenced to preach under the direction of Father Rigoleuc in 1651. In 1658 he gave himself up entirely to this ministry. The Blessed Eudes had been preaching the devotion to the Sacred Hearts since 1641. The reader who has followed this history may recall what had been said of the houses of Rennes, Hennebont and even of Guingamp, and he will arrive at the conclusion that Father Huby received his spirit of devotion to the Sacred Hearts from the Blessed Eudes or from his children. The Sisters of Our Lady of Charity were in Hennebont, his native city, in

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* From 1644 to 1649 M. de Kerlivio lived in Paris; his journeys of the Blessed Eudes were quite frequent during those years; his sojourn in the capital was often prolonged; his conferences with the clergy and his sermons most fruitful. The pious seminarian had a chance to know him, perhaps to follow him. Be that as it may, it is not possible to prove that this holy priest had had direct relations with the Blessed; at least it is certain that both were very friendly, and had friends in common, among whom we may single out Monsignor Pallu, Bishop of Heliopolis, the same that has been mentioned in the first part of this history as having organized at Rouen the work of the Refuge, founded by the Blessed with the aid of the Ladies of Mercy, after his mission in 1642.

1675. They came to Vannes in 1683. This good Father died in 1693, and the author of the notice made no remark about the time when he commenced to distribute the images and medals. Even if he had done this in 1651, the Blessed Eudes was ten years ahead of him in this work. But an attentive reader of his life, and the description which the author portrays, must believe that he only propagated them after the foundation of the monasteries, for on the same leaf is represented the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. They are, then, similar to those of the Blessed Eudes. The practices and prayers recommended by the Breton Missionary have also a great resemblance to those that the Blessed Eudes himself sought to make popular. They are, so to say, built on the principal formula of the Normand Missionary, *Ave Cor Sanctissimum.* They are the same acts of humility, adoration, love, desire, and the enumeration of the same virtues.

We are not acquainted with all the efficacy of the apostolate of the Blessed Eudes in favor of the Sacred Hearts, and we shall never find out, for it would be necessary to show in a complete way the books he distributed, and on what souls they acted. But historic persuasion authorizes us to believe that it was possible to study everywhere in their appearance the germs of the devotion to the Sacred Hearts which was shown in different places from 1641 to 1680, often finding, as we see in Vannes, the beginning of the seed that was sown directly by the Blessed Eudes or indirectly by his children.

Mlle. de Francheville, foundress of the retreats and faithful cooperatrix of M. de Kerlivio and of Father Huby in all their good works, aided them also in the foundation of the House of Our Lady of Charity. She understood very well what a great benefit this establishment would be, and what a help it would prove for their work; it would be a means for the conversion of many souls, and would help to preserve others from falling into sin.

At the time of the foundation of Hennebont, M. de Kerlivio, far from favoring his native place, wished to give the preference to Vannes; he even said it was the will of God; it was, indeed, prophetic, as we have seen that his words were verified. He never gave up the idea of getting the daughters of the Blessed Eudes in all the chief towns of the diocese. In union with Father Huby he ably profited by a matter of small moment to realize this design. The Bishop of Vannes had placed a woman in the monastery of Rennes who gave scandal in his episcopal city. Those good priests represented to him what an amount of good would result from a similar establishment in his diocese.

Bishop de Vautorte governed the diocese since 1671, and was not much in favor of new foundations; so he refused at first. But soon after God permitted he should be attacked with a grave illness. Our two holy priests, divinely inspired, said to him on their visit that if he would promise to contribute some of his goods and give his authority to the establishment of Our Lady of Charity they hoped that God would restore him to health. The well-known virtue of the authors of this assertion gave the Bishop the feeling that there was something in this idea, and he made a vow to give three thousand francs to commence the house. His restoration to normal health was sudden and perfect. He then gave them the authorization necessary, and dated the document December 5, 1680.

The same day the High Bailiff of Vannes also gave his consent. The extraordinary promptitude of this action may be explained thus: According to the Annals negotiations had been entered into a long time previously, under the episcopate of Bishop de Rosmadec, who had been transferred to Tours in 1670. We have not spoken of this project so far, fearing the Annalist had made a mistake. However, if the fact is true, Father Huby was known to the Blessed Eudes and M. de Kerlivio, who were in Rennes, to which place these negotiations have been traced.

The purchase of the house was made for seven thousand livres by M. de Francheville, Attorney-General, nephew of the foundress of the Retreat, and later on Bishop of Perigueux. M. de Kerlivio paid two thousand livres to fit it up for its new occupants. In the history of the city of Vannes this house is called the Little Convent. Today it is being used as a hospital.

Two pious persons whose names have been handed down to us, Mlles. Descluyeres and Bunetier, after having contributed much to the success of those first attempts, charged themselves with writing to all the monasteries of the Order for Religious. Replies were so slow that M. de Kerlivio decided to take three Sisters from the house of Hennebont, of which he was superior.

Sisters M. of Saint Theresa Dubois, M. of the Resurrection Cousin, and M. of the Passion Kerlero were received there with all sorts of honor by Bishop de Vautorte and the benefactors of the work. Mme. de Lugne, the prelate's sister, showed them great courtesy. The day after their arrival, January 29, 1683, feast of Saint Francis de Sales, was the day assigned for the solemn installation. Bishop de Vautorte presided. The Father Rector of the College of the Jesuit Fathers gave a brilliant sermon on the utility of the Institute, and showed what an advantage the new establishment would be to the city. His call on the generosity of the benefactors was so masterly and eloquent that Mme. d'Argouge, always so attached to the work, said to him at the end: "Reverend Father, what have you done? You have cut our purse strings." The ladies of those times always carried their purses suspended from their belts, so they could the more easily give their alms; but cutting them, meant that they gave them as they were. The good Lady President indicated that the Father Rector had done this.

On February 8th following the Sisters celebrated in grand style their patronal feast of the Holy Heart of Mary. M. de Kerlivio sang High Mass. The good Madame Helo noticed that the little chapel had no statue of the Blessed Virgin, and was strongly inspired to go and bring the one she had intended for the prison. M. de Kerlivio was consulted, and consented willingly. This statue has assured to the monastery the all-powerful protection of Mary. Madame Helo said that all her life she felt the effects of favors she received on that feast day when she observed in the monastery the feast of the Holy Heart of Mary.

From the day of their arrival the Sisters began to receive Penitents. But after eight months' sojourn in Vannes, on October 16th, without any motive, as far as can be accounted for at this late date, they returned to Hennebont. We have conjectured, on account of their youth, that possibly their religious formation was incomplete. Their profession could not have dated further back than two years.

Sister M. of the Passion Kerlero had died some time previous in the odor of sanctity. Very often, on a new foundation, God demands as a tribute and foundation stone a choice subject to take possession of Paradise in the name of the Order. Sister Kerlero is an example of this truth. After the foundation, free to give herself up to her attraction for mortification and work, she did both without using moderation, and consequently her health suffered. But the poverty and want of a young Community is, perhaps, a sufficient excuse for this excess. She was buried in the cemetery of the Sisters of the Visitation. The Sisters of that pious Community had a great veneration for her tomb, and have assured us that they received there many signal favors.

To continue our history, the Monastery of Rennes then sent to Vannes Sister M. of the Holy Heart of Jesus Bedault, Sister M. of the Infant Jesus le Vavasseur, and Sister M. of the Incarnation Cadiou, Lay-Sister. They arrived in Vannes on the evening of October 11th, and on account of the lateness of the hour they stopped at the House of the Retreat. Mlle. de Francheville, the pious foundress, received them most graciously and gave them a cordial welcome.

The next day the Sisters went to see Bishop de Vautorte and receive his blessing. His Lordship made them very welcome, and told them he wanted them to visit all the religious Communities in town. None had ever seen any Religious of the Order of Our Lady of Charity. They also went to pay their respects to their faithful benefactress, Mme. d'Argouge. Mlle. de Multeaux, econome of the Retreat, accompanied them everywhere they went, and it is possible that in doing them this service she found the germ of her religious vocation, for not long after she made her profession in the new monastery, under the name of Mary of Saint Vincent Lorre.

After these visits the Sisters entered their little home, happy to return to the exercises of the monastic life. M. de Kerlivio gave them fifty francs for their immediate needs, and on the next day, October 13th, he confirmed the election of the Mother Superior, and in accord with her agreed to give the black veil to Sister M. of the Incarnation Cadiou, who was only a Lay-Sister. She received it from his hands on October 24th. The fifth Monastery of Our Lady of Charity was founded.

The superioress, Mother M. of the Heart of Jesus Bedault, belonged to an honorable family, but a family that had lost its worldly possessions. She had been living as a lady companion to Mme. Ferret, wife of the Treasurer of the States of Brittany, a person well known for her piety and good works. Mlle. Bedault became her confidante, as well as the ordinary channel of her abundant alms. One day while she was in church she heard a voice which said to her: "Repair and restore my statue," and looking towards the extreme end of the bridge of Saint Michael she saw in the distance a statue of our Blessed Lady all deteriorating, and she set about putting it in a proper condition. God gave her a more noble mission still, in calling her to the religious life in the Order of Our Lady of Charity; truly, it was in that vocation that she labored in repairing the image of God, destroyed in so many sinful souls.

The famous Mother M. of the Trinity received her in Rennes about the year 1669. This skilful directress gave many humiliations to the new postulant to despoil her of the haughty manner that was a natural trait of our dear Sister. Being a generous soul, Mlle. Bedault understood the advantages of this strong, spiritual medicine, and loved the Mother Superior all the more for it. Her profession was delayed by the arrival of the Sisters that had come from Caen to take up the direction of that house. This hard trial did not shake her courage, and at length she made her sacrifice to the Lord.

Sister M. of the Sacred Heart of Jesus had an exceeding great aptitude for the education of youth. Hence, the direction of the boarding school was often confided to her. She had a remarkable talent of drawing to herself these young souls, and of discerning their characters, and it was according to this knowledge that she was able to guide them so well. Under her direction those young souls were often raised to a high degree of virtue. Our Lord called many of them to consecrate themselves to His service, and they became the ornament of the House of Vannes, as well as the House of Rennes.

This Sister was raised to a supernatural degree of perfection, if we may judge by this trait. One day she saw in spirit a house whose every detail was shown her; the explanation of this vision, if we may call it so, was given her immediately, for the Holy Virgin said to her: "One day I shall be honored in that house." On her entrance in Vannes as superioress she recognized the places as if she had inhabited them previously. Her opposition to this foundation ceased, and she went to work courageously, sure that such was the Will of God.

Sister M. of the Infant Jesus Levavasseur belonged to a family of saints. All her brothers, save one, had entered the ecclesiastical state, or the religious state. Herself and her sister consecrated themselves to God in the Monastery of Rennes. When she presented herself to Mother M. of Saint Julien to ask to be received this good superioress refused her, on account of her delicate appearance. The pain that this refusal cost her was so great that she could not go home, but remained weeping bitterly in the parlor. This perseverance merited for her the favor of being received. Notwithstanding her continual ill health the services that she rendered the houses of Rennes and Vannes showed that a postulant ought not to be denied admittance because of feeble health. In every emergency this young Sister showed the energy she possessed, and other occasions brought out to the fullest extent her spirit of sacrifice.

Sister M. of the Incarnation Cadiou was born at Saint-Malo. Her father was a merchant there; he was later on lost at sea, with his entire fortune. Her mother died shortly after. All these misfortunes brought her to Rennes, where she lived with one of her uncles, a silk merchant. Here she had formerly lived with her grandmother. From her earliest childhood she developed a mistrust and secret repugnance for the world, and utterly refused to follow the fashions then in vogue, always attiring herself with the utmost simplicity.

God called her to a state more perfect still, calling her to His service by means of the sermons of the Blessed Eudes. Here is her own version of the case:

> When I was about eighteen years old I went to Rennes. When there some time our Blessed Father Eudes gave a mission. It was a great benefit to me. How I admired his truly apostolic zeal! I often went to hear him preach. His persuasive eloquence made much impression on every one. One day in particular he preached on the Judgment. I was overwhelmed; my heart was deeply moved; then I thoroughly understood all the great truths he was endeavoring to make us see; indeed, I could hardly comprehend them better if I saw them unveiled before me.
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> But what strengthened the effect of this grace in me was, that having gone to the house of a widow to tell her about the sermon I had heard, and give it in detail to her as best I could, I found in one instant that I was as if beside myself—in other words, I was like a person demented: the whole immense universe seemed to me to be toppling around me; nature seemed to be on the verge of collapse. At the same time I was made to understand the instability of all sublunary things, and the

complete nothingness of all that was not God. I do not know how long I remained in this state, but I felt myself completely changed, and I was strongly impressed with a great contempt for worldly things.

On leaving that place God showed me the state of my soul and the hideousness of my sins, and I could not say a single word except: "O God, my God, it is only too true." I felt myself penetrated with sorrow and love, and animated with a lively desire of consecrating myself to God.

This sermon on the Judgment determined at least one other vocation to the Order of Our Lady of Charity. By these facts which have been made known to us we may have an idea of the efficacy of the sermons of the zealous missionary. Mlle. Cadiou had the happiness of confessing to the Blessed Eudes, and of conferring with him concerning her inner life. This enlightened director soon perceived that she was one of the elect souls of whom the world is not worthy, and he counselled her to follow her attraction for the religious life. However, it was not until three years later that it was possible for her to respond to the call of God in the religious state.

The situation of her family did not permit them to furnish her with a dowry. She then thought of writing to her relatives in Saint-Malo to help her.

"I brought my letter," she said, "to the Holy Savior,* and I prayed our Blessed Mother to ask that my petition might be granted. I told her that I placed the success of my venture in her hands. At that time I had been asking my admission into the Order of the Visitation; I went there, but I felt an extreme repugnance for that monastery. Then I begged my grandmother to take me to Our Lady of Charity, where Father Jourdan, my confessor, and a missionary† had already spoken on my behalf. We went there, my grandmother and I, and had a visit with Mother M. of the Trinity and Mother M. of Saint Julien, and my heart was filled with joy. They promised me that I would be a Religious, even if my letters were not successful."

She entered the Community, but since she had no dowry she was received as a Lay-Sister. This humble condition was the least of her troubles. "For," she said, "since I have been granted this grace I feel that I care for nothing else but the practice of virtue, and especially of those virtues most opposite to my temperament. Although I am only a poor orphan, dependent on my relations, and having no earthly goods, I have a big heart, mountains of pride, as a lover of independence, I fly from humiliations and seek only honor and the esteem of creatures."

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*The choice of this church seemed to indicate, by this fact, that the Blessed had erected there a Confraternity in honor of the Holy Heart of Mary, which has continued in all its fervor even to the present day.

†He was the director of the seminary founded by the Blessed Eudes.

Such were the Sisters who became the real foundresses of Vannes. The Holy Mother of God showed in many ways how dear to her was this new house. Mme. Lucas, a lady of great piety and charming simplicity in her relations and dealings with heaven, wrote to Mother Bedault: "I must tell you that a holy young girl from the country, an elect soul and one endowed with many special graces, and one who does not know you at all, being in prayer one day, saw the Holy Virgin, who said to her: The superioress of Our Lady of Charity of Vannes asks me every day to take her Community under my protection, but I have done so already." Indeed, every evening after matins when the Community left the choir Mother Bedault said a prayer before the statue of our Lady. This revelation, then, was a response to her prayer.

This protection was all the more necessary to the new convent, because during that time the demon strove very hard to destroy it The edifying conversion of several Penitents excited his fury. He filled the mind of the Bishop of Vannes with misgivings regarding the future of this work, and suggested to him that the house, not being endowed, would become a charge on the diocese. Mme. Lucas, in some supernatural manner, knew of his disquiet—she even told Mother Heurtant, when she arrived in Vannes, of this disposition of the prelate.

The next day there was to be a reception; the ceremony was commenced when Mother M. of the Trinity was told that Bishop de Vautorte was getting into his carriage with the intention of coming to the Charity to take away the Blessed Sacrament, and close the house. Full of confidence and fervor the Mother cast herself on her knees to supplicate our Lord and His holy Mother not to permit such a misfortune. Succor came immediately. When he arrived at the door of the monastery he turned to the coachman and told him to drive back to the episcopal palace. From that time his benevolence towards the Little Convent and its inmates never faltered.

Besides, his sister, Mme. de Lugne, was one of the principal benefactresses during those first years when, without any endowment, the monastery was living only on alms.

A new and quite unexpected tempest broke over the Little Convent. The Sisters were established on a dependent fief of the Chapter of the Cathedral. The Canons made representations to Bishop de Vautorte that it must not be tolerated any longer. This privilege having been granted already to three Communities it must gradually weaken and destroy their rights, the prelate warned the Religious, proposing to them at the same time how much better off they would be if they could establish themselves on their own land. The nuns, before responding to such a decision, wished first to consult M. de Kerlivio. Not wishing to give his decision on such an important matter before he prayed for guidance he waited for some days. Meantime, the Sisters were annoyed by the procedure of the Canons, and asked some of their friends to be on the lookout for a suitable house for them. M. de Kerlivio, having heard of this, came to the monastery, remonstrated severely with Superior and the Assistant for their haste, and said to them: "Our Lord wishes that His Holy Mother be honored in this place; banish the thought of leaving at any time, and do not be troubled about anything, for the Canons will consent to your establishment." And they did consent, contrary to all human expectations.

All these proofs of the tenderness of Mary towards her Community made Mother M. of the Heart of Jesus put all her confidence in the maternal Heart of this celestial Virgin, upon whom she called in all her necessities with more confidence than ever. She exposed to her, the tenderest of Mothers, the spiritual and temporal interests of the Sisters with the simplicity of a child; she begged her to supply her incapacity and to maintain perfect regularity in the house.

She was extremely vigilant herself to see that everything was orderly. Notwithstanding the violence that she had to do herself in reprehending others for faults committed she let none pass unheeded, so that no bad result would accrue from neglect of duty. Hence, she threatened Mme. Lucas that she would not open the door for her if she came there after the time appointed by the Rule. This good lady who, on account of grave reasons had been kept there, was sorely mortified by this firmness; but later on she was supernaturally enlightened, recognized the right that the superior had in this matter, and then went with her ordinary simplicity and related the grace she had receeived. Consequently, she had more esteem for Mother M. of the Heart of Jesus. Moreover, the general feeling regarding the regular conduct of this Mother, made it plain that it drew down abundant blessings of God on the monastery.

Notwithstanding all these favors the weight of the superiority appeared to her an overwhelming burden, and she sought help in every way. When the return of Mother Heurtant from Guingamp became known she sought to obtain an obedience that she be sent to Vannes. She succeeded, and shortly after the arrival of her good Novice Mistress she wanted to place the whole charge in her hands, but M. de Kerlivio would not consent; he made her finish her triennial.

After her deposition this respected Sister returned with the greatest happiness to a life of humility and obedience. She had for superiors several of her former novices. They were not less at liberty to warn her than if she had been a young professed. The least word on their part, the least sign of their will, was for her an inviolable law. This perfect obedience, especially in her old age, was a continual subject of edification for the young Sisters. Often Assistant or Counsellor, Mother Bedault made no use of authority in those charges than simply to repress a murmur or the appearance of one.

"God," she said on those occasions, "fills the superiors so abundantly with His spirit, and attaches our perfection to their guidance so strongly, that we cannot receive the graces and lights that we need except through this channel. When we fail in respect, obedience or submission in their regard, it is not to a creature that we refuse these duties, but to God Himself, and He never fails to withdraw the graces that in His goodness He had intended for us, which is the greatest chastisement that He can inflict in this world on a disobedient soul."

She herself practiced these counsels. To assist her in her needs while she was infirm, they gave her a Lay-Sister; she regarded her as her superior, doing only what this Sister told her to do. This complete indifference made the Mother Superior say to her sometimes: "Sister, is there not something that you would like to have? If so, you would please me by telling it." "My dear Mother," replied this holy soul, "I am truly detached from everything, for what is there worth having in this life! What do I want? Lord, God, I want to see You! Ah, I am so well off; what can I desire more? To see You! Oh, to see and enjoy You forever!" The least service that was rendered her excited her gratitude, and she showed it in the most amiable manner. Not being able to do anything more for herself she promised the Sisters to render them much service by offering prayers for their intention, in this way striving to return their kind offices with Christ-like love. Her actions incited the Sisters to rival each other in waiting on her, for they had such belief in the efficacy of her prayers that they wanted to be ever with her or doing something for her.

Since her deposition Mother Bedault was often employed in the care of the Penitents, and she had thus occasion of exercising her zeal for the salvation of souls. When old age did not permit this she offered her prayers and sufferings for their sanctification. Her time was almost exclusively employed in reciting for them and for the souls in Purgatory the Psalter and other prayers.

She was stricken with an attack of paralysis some years before her death, which deprived her almost of the use of speech. Afraid that she might not be conscious in her last moments she strove to make before every confession the acts for the preparation for death. A little later she became childish. In the lucid moments she was favored with from time to time her only interior occupation consisted in accepting this state of complete abjection through love for God. To bring back her full consciousness of everything it frequently sufficed to speak to her of God and Holy Communion. Her confessor, who knew the purity of her soul, brought the Bread of Life to her every fifteen days. She slept sweetly in the Lord on May 20, 1713, aged eighty-four years, being forty years professed.

CHAPTER II

MOTHER M. OF THE TRINITY HEURTANT AT VANNES—FAVORS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN—PROPAGATION OF THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEARTS—LAST YEARS AND DEATH OF MOTHER M. OF THE TRINITY HEURTANT—DEATH OF SEVERAL SISTERS, ESPECIALLY THAT OF SISTER MENARD

Mother M. of the Trinity Heurtant

MOTHER M. of the Heart of Jesus had petitioned, as we have already said, that Mother M. of the Trinity Heurtant would be sent to Vannes. She was elected superioress on the Ascension, 1686.

The gifts and qualities that had so admirably served her on the foundations of Rennes and Guingamp gave her the same success in this house. If this great Religious was not the foundress it was she at least who organized it definitely. Her reputation for sanctity preceded her to Vannes. In 1675 the King had transferred the Parliament of Brittany to Vannes to punish Rennes for some disobedience to his orders. On her return to Vannes Mother Heurtant found the greater number of the great ladies who were placed under her direction, in the capital of the province.

Presently resources arrived in abundance, and all the different works or industries were in operation, as in the other houses. We find that at that time, besides the work of the Penitents, they had a boarding establishment for adults and children. Young persons of the wealthiest families solicited admission to the novitiate, and became very virtuous Religious, and distinguished for their zeal.

Among the temporal favors that Mother M. of the Trinity received we might put to the fore the benefits of the Marchioness du Plessix Josso de Goullayne. Towards the end of the superiority of Mother Bedault this powerful lady had asked if it would be possible for her to have apartments in the monastery, where she could retire whenever her husband would be absent, which often happened. The counsel of the house hesitated for the moment, because this lady would require the liberty to go and come when she pleased. M. de Kerlivio was consulted. According to his ordinary method of acting he requested that he be given time to recommend the matter to God. He came back on the following day, and said: "You should be careful not to refuse the Marchioness, because God has sent her to you to help your house. I have had full knowledge of this while saying Mass."

Madame du Plessix was received there about the year 1686. Some months later her husband died in Paris; she then took the resolution to attach herself to the house and its interests. Meantime, Mme. de Lugne died. From the establishment of the monastery she had not ceased to help it by her abundant means. Madame du Plessix wished to take her place, and furnished not only the meat, eggs and fish, but also the flour and grain. Then she was declared foundress with the title, and gave to the convent the noble property of the Pont, with the water-mill and all her dependencies in the parishes of The and Noyallo.

The life of this worthy benefactress has been written by one of the Sisters. She shows her to have been full of goodness, and very solicitous for all her vassals. She was a perfect model of a Christian land-owner. Cases of this kind were not so rare during that period, if we credit the historians of the Revolution. The attachment of the Breton peasantry to their lords and masters during those evil days do not permit us to contest this assertion.

Among the gifts of this good lady the Sisters appreciated especially the gift of a large relic of the true Cross, which the Marquis of Goullayne, an ambassador to the Holy See, had receeived from Pope Boniface IX. This precious gift was borne processionally to the Penitents' Class, and immediately four or five of them, touched by grace, were sincerely converted.

In the History of Hennebont the union of the Sisters of that house and those of Vannes has been recounted, as well as the obtaining of the letters patent of the King, which event was looked upon almost as a miracle.

The Monastery of Vannes enjoyed many benefits under the kind patronage of Mme. de Brie; nevertheless, it did not feel obliged to acquit itself of those debts; the letters say nothing in regard to that. God permitted this respected benefactress to come herself by an apparition to claim the suffrages of the Sisters. The circumstances surrounding this fact have not come down to us, but the following decision taken by the Chapter was made in consequence: "It has been resolved, after much consultation, that, enjoying as we are the privileges of the foundation of Mme. de Brie, we are obliged to have prayers and services for the repose of her soul, as has been stipulated in the contract. Dated October 10, 1695."

The Annals also relate numerous favors obtained from the Holy Virgin.

A novice was violently tempted against her vocation, and had decided to leave the same day. A Sister who had conceived great hopes regarding this young lady saw her condition, and was deeply pained by her attitude. She made a vow to Our Blessed Mother to recite during nine days the Office of her Immaculate Conception, and take the discipline as many times, if the postulant persevered. They recited in choir the *Ave Maris Stella* of the Vespers; at the end of the office the novice made known that she wished to live and die in the monastery.

One young lady, Mlle. le Mintier, entered first as a boarder; later she felt called to the religious life. Her parents were very much opposed, and strove to make her leave the convent, but failed in their effort. Mme. Lucas recommended her to the Blessed Virgin, kneeling before her miraculous statue; she heard a voice issuing from the statue saying: "They should let her go—she will return; I have taken her under my protection." This promise was realized some time later; Mlle. de Mintier became an excellent Religious under the name of Sister M. of the Conception. She died full of merits on July 1, 1743.

Mme. Lucas, herself, felt the powerful effects of the protection of the Holy Virgin. Threatened by a possible loss of a lawsuit, a very important affair, she addressed herself to this good Mother to prevent this loss, when the same voice said to her: "Take and read." "Ah, dear Holy Mother," she replied, "how can I do that; all my papers are with the lawyers, and it is not possible for me to get them." "Go, responded the same voice, "and I shall provide the means for you." Which she did, needless to say. Against all usual proceedings the recorder gave her back her vouchers, and she found without difficulty the particular one needed.

The Annals relate several miraculous cures which occurred during the first sixteen years of the foundation. The convent chapel, though very small, was very much frequented; several Masses were celebrated there, which had been founded by the devotion of the faithful. In one of the circulars the Sisters say: "Four lamps burned day and night before the statue of our incomparable Mother, and a great quantity of candles were consumed on her altar. The faith of the people was so great that several persons, not being able to see the statue in our choir, kissed the wall nearest to the place where it stood."

Today, in the chapel of the hospital, will be found a staute of the Virgin that belonged to the Little Convent. It corresponds very well to the description which the Annals give of this miraculous statue. May these lines renew the veneration which, by so many titles, it has been surrounded by the Religious of the monastery and the inhabitants of Vannes. If this statue, which has been so many times mentioned and has been the instrument of so many graces and miracles, had been in Italy, for example, the lively faith of that people would have raised a splendid church in its honor, for there is no motive for doubting the numerous facts related and conserved in those Annals.

It was at that time also, and without doubt through the apostolate of Mother M. of the Trinity, that the devotion to the Sacred Hearts was spread through the diocese. The Society of the Children of the Heart of the Admirable Mother increased visibly.

According to an old manual of the Rule Bishop d' Argouges, who in 1688* had succeeded Bishop de Vautorte, joined the Society, too, as well as a great number of the clergy. The Annals speak of a priest, Father Dorso, as a member of this Society, and who, to show his union with the monastery, begged the favor of being buried in its cemetery. They also mention a Bishop of Beritte who was also enrolled in the society. At the end of the life of Bishop d'Argouges this strange prelate fulfilled the episcopal functions in Vannes.

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* Right Reverend M. d'Argouges was not preconizated until 1692, but on account of an abuse too frequent at that time in Vannes, he was named, in the month of January, Vicar Capitular by the Chapter, and governed the diocese in that capacity.

Madame d'Argouges, mother of the Bishop, and several great society ladies were the first to be inscribed in this pious association, and fulfilled the obligations with fervor. The feasts of the Sacred Hearts were solemnized with much state in Vannes.

Father Costil, to prove that the devotion to the Sacred Hearts commenced with the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, was supported in this by a letter from Father Blouet de Camilly to the Bishop of Vannes. If we were able at the present writing to call on this letter, as well as that of the Bishop, we would be morally certain of the efficacy of the apostolate of the Sacred Hearts by the children of the Blessed Eudes.

But if we wish to study attentively the Offices composed during the episcopacy of Bishop de Bertin in 1757 we would see that that prelate borrowed numerous parts from the Blessed Eudes, and we would acquire a moral certitude that the devotion to the Sacred Hearts in the diocese of Vannes had a Eudistic origin. The Blessed, in his writings and in his offices, taught the intimate union that existed between the Heart of Jesus and that of Mary. Bishop de Bertin, by force of circumstances, perhaps, has taken that doctrine. In effect, going further than the Blessed Eudes, he only established one feast, that of the Divine Heart of Jesus and of the most loving Heart of Mary: *Festum Divinissimi Cordis Jesus et Amantissimi Cordis Mariae.*

The holy life of Mother Heurtant merited all those blessings. Now more than ever was her union with God continuous, and now more than ever did her example animate the Sisters to follow in her footsteps. We dare not relate all her heroic acts of mortification here, fearing to shock the delicacy of our readers. Alas! not to relate them is a mark of our relaxation, since we cannot read what the saints had the courage to perform.

One day while this good Mother was walking in the garden she noticed that they had thrown decayed beans in the manure pile. She picked them out, and bringing them to the kitchen, severely reprimanded the Sisters, reproaching them for thus failing in poverty, allowing that to be thrown away which could have been eaten or given to the poor, and then and there ordered them to be served up for the next meal. She, herself, ate all those beans that had lain in the dung for two days. Her abstinence from food was so marked that we have been assured that she lived for six months on a little chervil at each meal. At other times she feasted on the heads of fish without any seasoning. When there was absolute necessity to restore her strength she accepted a more strengthening diet only after mixing it with something that took away all flavor, and gave it a disagreeable taste.

Sometimes God visibly recompensed Mother Heurtant for all her sacrifices. During a retreat that she made with a Lay-Sister she held many communications with her regarding the Life and Mysteries of our Lord in the Holy Eucharist, especially dwelling on His prodigious abasement; she was so penetrated with love that her countenance appeared as if on fire; she could not contain the flames of Divine love that consumed her; she took the Sister by the arm, and leaning on her, said: "Come, my dear child, come to the choir." Scarcely had she entered than she fell into an ecstacy; this extraordinary condition frightened the Sister, who had never seen anything like it before; still, she believed it was a sudden attack of syncope. Thinking that Mother Heurtant was really going to die she prayed with the greatest fervor to the Blessed Mother to come to her assistance. Happily, the Religious hurried to the scene, and reassured her. All together the Sisters witnessed this wondrous prodigy, which lasted quite a long time.

One evening after the matins, the Assistant was bringing the keys of the house, according to custom, and found Mother on her knees in her cell before her crucifix, her countenance inflamed and radiating an extraordinary loveliness; so beautiful was her appearance that the Assistant could hardly recognize her. Another time the Holy Spirit was seen hovering around her in the form of a dove over her heart.

During the superiority of Mother M. of the Trinity trials of all kinds tried her constancy. In a serious illness she only escaped death through the prayers of the Sisters and of Father Huby. When this good Father came to see her after her recovery he attributed all the merit of her cure to M. de Kerlivio, who had died holily in his arms on March 21, 1685: "Behold," he said, "you have recovered, but you owe this favor, after God, to M. de Kerlivio. Since you prevented him from dying for twelve days, and so retarded his entrance into Glory, in his turn he also has closed the door of heaven for you for some time to come." To this amiable pleasantry the good Mother replied in the same light vein: "Why, Father, I did not think that the saints kept animosity in their hearts, but I have found out today that they do." This little trait shows what intimate relationship there was between those holy souls, and the charming amiability of their dealings with each other.

Mother Heurtant had the sorrow to lose Sister M. of Saint John Menard, the faithful companion of all her labors, the intelligent colaborer in all her undertakings in Rennes, Paris, Guingamp and Vannes. Very few Religious have rendered so much service to the Institute, and fewer yet have surpassed her in the spirit of abnegation. In effect, as we have already said, from the arrival of Mother M. of the Trinity in Rennes, Sister Menard, who had for a long time governed that house, completely effaced herself, leaving to the new superior all the honors. After the Sisters took possession of the monastery, she contented herself with the role of Touriere Sister, to render herself more useful to the convent. She remained in this humble condition until her arrival in Vannes; then only did she pronounce her vows and keep the enclosure.

Charity for the neighbor had always been the characteristic virtue of this good Religious. We can say that Sister Menard died a victim. Though suffering much herself she did not want any one else to take care of her beloved superior during her serious illness, of which we have already spoken. Her infirmities increased. Pneumonia set in, and she died, after five days of intense suffering, in 1688. She was fifty-six years old, and was always employed in the service of God and her neighbor.

It was Mother M. of the Trinity, herself, who wrote the notice of her death that was sent around to the monasteries. Their holy friendship made her take this charge upon herself.

Death also snatched away from the monastery two pious widows. Widowhood is holy when, according to Saint Paul, it is accompanied by works of charity. More freedom is found in this state than in any other. In the beginning of the Order we have seen many persons, once their bonds were severed by death, embrace the religious life and arrive at a high degree of sanctity. Such as Sister M. of Saint Louis de la Chesnaye Descluyeres and Sister M. of the Holy Spirit Le Car.

The former had been living with Mlle. Bunetier, who herself had become a Religious under the name of Sister M. of the Holy Savior, and one of the instruments God made use of in the foundation of the monastery. When the cares of family concerns permitted, she retired to the convent in the capacity of boarder, promising herself that after her temporalities could be regulated she would embrace the religious life in all its perfection. The Sisters were much edified with her conversations, which nearly always had for object things that concerned the glory of God and her personal sanctification. In the midst of an unjust legal process and suffering from many consequent troubles her patience and charity never deserted her. When she was sixty-six years old she was taken with a violent fever, which carried her off in a few days. Before her death she had the happiness of pronouncing her vows. Her confessor proposed to her that she only make them conditionally, but her fervor would not allow that; she said that if our Lord would restore her to health she was fully decided to remain His spouse forever, and occupy herself in thanking Him for making her a daughter of the Holy Heart of His Holy Mother. She expired, say the "Flowers," on Sunday, March 7, 1688, having recovered her baptismal innocence by the merits of her profession. After her decease the beauty of her countenance seemed to reflect the beatitude of her soul, and interiorly excited the beholders to invoke her devoutly.

Sister M. of the Holy Spirit Le Car was the widow of M. Morel, parliamentary solicitor. Her parents, notwithstanding her desire of consecrating herself to the Lord, forced her into this marriage when she was only thirteen years old. The care and Christian education of her children filled her life up to the moment when she saw her two sons honorably established in the world, and her daughter a Religious in the Monastery of Rennes. After her husband's death her time was completely occupied with works of piety and charity. It was to render service to the Sisters of Rennes that she went to Vannes about the year 1684, when they were commencing to form the new monastery there.

The examples of virtue which she saw around her, particularly those set her by Mothers Bedault and Heurtant, reawoke her former desire for the religious life, and she generously commenced her novitiate. A great courage was needed to begin life in the monastery at that time, as they were prepared to see it overthrown at any time on account of a lack of resources, and the failure of securing the letters patent. Mme. Morel was the first postulant in that convent who was admitted to the habit. Her piety served to strengthen its existence. Mother M. of the Trinity, being at that time Assistant and directress, had a thorough knowledge of her prayerful spirit, and knowing her devotion to the souls in Purgatory, ordered her to address prayers to those holy souls, to obtain through their intercession, the end of the trials and opposition that were so annoying to the little Community. Later on, when this grace was obtained, Mother Heurtant, who had her own part in it, attributed the favors to the prayers of Sister M. of the Holy Spirit. The author of her biography assures us that the suffering souls always obtained for her whatever she prayed for. After her profession she made the *Heroic Act,* then not very much known, and offered to God for their relief all her merits, prayers, communions, mortifications and labors.

She was very much esteemed by the Community, and it hoped for great things from her, when it pleased God to add new gems to her crown by sending her a long and cruel illness of fourteen months. A cancer cast its deadly ramifications all through the bowels, permitting no repose day or night. The doctors, not understanding her illness, tried different remedies without avail. The poor patient could only say: "I do hope this treatment will give me some relief; if God does not will it may His holy Will be done and His holy Name be blessed." Notwithstanding the violence of her sufferings she dragged herself to the choir to assist at Mass and receive Holy Communion. It was from this holy and adorable Sacrament that she drew her strength, and she was permitted to approach every day. Nothing could better show forth her extraordinary virtue than the constraint that she put upon herself to stifle any complaint which the excessive sufferings would naturally wring from her when she was in the infirmary. Her virtue was alarmed at any involuntary cries that she could not stifle, and during the night if louder cries burst from her lips she asked pardon for breaking the silence of that holy and solitary time.

At the beginning of January, 1691, her death seemed quite near; the Holy Viaticum was brought to her. On the morning of the 8th she felt very weak, and demanded Extreme Unction, but the infirmarian told her to be at peace; obedient unto death she spoke no more. At nine o'clock she ventured with the following: "Think for me, I beg of you." They understood her desire, and had her administered; she received the Sacrament of the Dying with full consciousness. Death had always caused her extreme terror; now she saw it approach without the slightest fear. She was aged fifty-nine years, and was five years professed.

One year previous the monastery lost Sister M. of Saint Theresa of Jesus Bigarre, after a long illness borne with Christ-like fortitude during three years. Blessed Eudes called sickness the blessing of Communities; that of Vannes had had blessings in abundance, according to his saying, during the first years of its existence. Besides these two we have mentioned, Sister M. of the Conception le Lieupaul remained an inhabitant of the Infirmary during eight years. This dear Sister was the deposed of Hennebont. Purified thus by long years of sufferings she died in the thirty-sixth year of her profession, on March 17th, 1693. On the Ascension, 1692, Mother M. of the Trinity had been regularly deposed. And here is a fact that cannot be doubted. These two holy Religious, united by bonds of the highest friendship since their novitiate in Caen, made a promise between them that the one who would die first would, with the permission of God, announce her tidings to the other. After the death of Sister le Lieupaul Mother Heurtant just before rising heard a knock on the door of her cell. Having responded, according to custom, *In the Name of God,* she saw Sister le Lieupaul enter, clothed in a splendid white garment; she seemed entirely transfigured; astonished she said to her: "Is it really you, my dear Sister M. of the Conception?" "Yes," she replied, "it is I; I have come to keep my promise." "But, my dear Sister," replied Mother of the Trinity, "what has become of your body, so thin and emaciated?" "It exists no longer," returned the apparition, "all has been repaired through Divine grace. While my body is in the earth, where it performs its functions —that is to say, is being destroyed and consumed, my soul is in Glory, where it enjoys God forever."

The discourse was long; the deceased predicted to Mother Heurtant that many trials would occur, which prediction was verified. The Annalist makes us understand that they were very severe. Perhaps they may have come from the interior of the monastery, for her reputation for sanctity spread outside amazingly. What makes us think this is, that during the next seventeen years that she lived she was never reelected superioress, and the notice states that it was to keep her in humility that God had given her, or rather left her, defects which seem to have been a natural impulsiveness and a too great complaisance towards the benefactors of the house. The first she never repressed.

We signalize these blemishes on an otherwise perfect soul. God sees stains even in the blessed spirits. These imperfections in the holiest of God's creatures on this earth are useful for us, that we may avoid discouragement. A Bishop keenly criticised the newly published life of a prelate saying: "This history has a defect, a very grave defect. Bishop J . . . . is shown in this biography as faultless." We do not wish to incur this reproach ,and we believe that, to all accounts, Mother M. of the Trinity, notwithstanding her eminent sanctity, did not arrive at absolute perfection, and that human passions agitated her not infrequently. God drew good out of evil, making use of it to keep her in humility. It was the way He acted to Saint Paul and all His saints. He also wished to purify this soul more and more in the crucible of affliction.

These new crosses weighed very heavy, if we may judge by the symbolical apparition that she had. One day, after Communion, her garments, her person and her hands appeared all covered with blood. Much surprised she asked an explanation of this vision of Father Du Parc, Rector of the Jesuits. This Father replied that such a thing happened to members of their Society who were called to martyrdom or who suffer great persecutions, and it would be well to prepare herself for great tribulations. This advice did not terrify this good Mother. She simply said: "Let whatever God wills happen, my Father; I shall not worry, and I fear nothing. I am in the power of love; I shall serve God day and night. Provided God is not offended, I will not fear whatever He sends me."

After her deposition Mother M. of the Trinity took up the routine of the common life. The most experienced eye could not perceive that she had been charged in the Order with the most important employments, so exact and submissive was she now to the smallest observances. Fervent souls like hers never make use of privileges on account of their past, and they endeavor to make new progress in virtue.

The employments of Mother M. of the Trinity were, as much as her health permitted, the charges of Assistant and directress of the novitiate. She had a remarkable talent for forming new subjects to the religious life. Her firm conduct had, however, nothing strained or narrow about it. Among the virtues she recommended to her novices, as the most essential to their vocation, simplicity, obedience and mortification held the first rank. She reprehended severely those who failed in those particulars. But in her corrections her maternal tenderness always held sway, so that the love and confidence of her novices never diminished.

To establish them firmly in those solid virtues Mother Heurtant taught them to get rid, as quickly as possible, of a useless tendency to make reflections on what might never occur, and to think too much in a discouraging way of faults committed, for very often self-love causes this troubled condition in persons commencing to give themselves to God. Read her comments on this subject:

> A mind subject to this defect will never be brave; it puts a great obstacle to perfection, and besides is a loss of time. When you recognize your fault, you must humble yourself interiorly before God and exteriorly before your Sisters; you must work with new courage to correct yourself and regain by fervor what you have lost through negligence. Doing the contrary, and amusing yourself by weeping and lamenting over yourself, is a worthless job, to say the least; rather be up and doing something worth while; afflict yourself sincerely for the offense against His Divine Majesty, and prove to Him that it is not your heart that is bad, but that you are a weak, good-for-nothing creature. God demands generous souls, who undertake the work of their perfection with an energetic determination, without reflecting on the cost. It is only a failing in this resolution that makes a great number of souls fearful and timorous, and that keeps them always in the same rut of despond, because they are not generous.

God continued to assist Mother Heurtant, often discovering to her the trials as well as the faults of her novices before they even mentioned them to her. One of them went to her more for the sake of being consoled than to accept the advice she expected to get. Before she opened her mouth to speak the Mother prevented her with these words: "Go away, my Sister; since you have resolved to do nothing that I might counsel you to do, it is useless for me to speak." Another was very much troubled about a fault she had committed in the world; the Mother said to her one day: "My child, do not be disquieted about anything you have done before your entrance. God has pardoned you, for you did not know any better." Thus she proved to the novice that the state of her soul was known to her, and peace descended on her soul.

The life of Mother M. of the Ascension La Valette, her niece, foundress of La Rochelle, tells us that in the last years of her life Mother Heurtant became deaf, and lost her memory. She then retired, as much as was possible, from visiting people that demanded her presence, to occupy herself alone with God. Her only fear was that she did not sufficiently correspond to His designs on her. In a sentiment of sincere humility she sometimes said: "I tremble when I think of the account that I shall have to render to God. It is not my sins that terrify me; I hope for the pardon of them all through the merits of the Blood and Passion of our Lord, which is of infinite price; but what makes me tremble is the abuse that I have made of so many graces. What confusion when He shall put before my gaze all the lights and other means of salvation that I have had by lectures, instructions and good examples, especially by the inestimable grace of my vocation, of preference to so many others whom He left in the world, and who would have profited so much better of those graces had He so given them! Oh, how difficult will it be for me to stand that awful sight, and will not the judgment be something awful!"

The six last months of her life was certainly a time of uninterrupted sufferings, but she continued, none the less, to refuse herself any satisfaction, even the most permissible. When her illness gave her a little respite she could be seen, after the rising bell, one of the first in the choir, and at all the other exercises. It often happened that accidents put her in danger of death; however, next morning she would rise to go and hear Mass and communicate; for thirty years she was in the habit of doing so every day; small wonder if the habit became second nature with her. If a Sister remonstrated with her on those severities to herself she replied with her ordinary simplicity: "I ought not seek repose until I go to heaven. I am so lax and so lazy that I shall hear then the reproaches our Lord will make me on this subject. The demon would rejoice and mock me if I did not do some penance now. Permit me, I pray you, to do all I can. Take care that your affection does not give to your Mother a thought that might deprive me of Holy Communion. Ah, would it not be a great pain if I could not receive. The state of misery and poverty to which I am reduced is already great; I pray you not to increase it."

The fear of opposing the designs of God over her soul, so evidently privileged, made her accept all the permissions granted her. On February 22, 1709, Mother M. of the Trinity arose with a very heavy cold; after having communicated she was taken with a high fever. Presently the doctor was called; he diagnosed her condition as an acute attack of pneumonia, and declared her in a very precarious state. Notwithstanding the rigor of the season on the two following days she wished to assist at Mass and communicate. On the second day she was so weak that the priest thought she was going to expire.

When she went back to the infirmary the Mother Superior, who helped her to the choir, reproached herself for yielding to her. The poor invalid replied with her usual good humor: "Well, Mother, do not trouble yourself about it; it is done, and it surely will be the last time." From that moment her condition became alarming; it was considered time to bring her the Holy Viaticum. Before receiving she asked pardon of the Community. The words she made use of were so touching that all the Sisters shed bitter tears; the Mother Superior found it impossible to answer. It was the confessor who replied, saying to her: "Mother, all the Sisters of the Congregation ask you to pardon them for the trouble and pain they have caused you, and assure you of their gratitude for all the services you have rendered them. They beg you, also, to remember them when you are with God." The dying nun replied: "Yes, my Father; I shall not fail to do so." A promise full of hope which she always kept with exactitude.

Some time afterwards a Sister said to her: "Although weakness prevents you from speaking; still, is not your mind attentive and united to God?" "Yes," replied the dying nun. "Do you not make all the acts that you remember so well?" continued the Sister. But humility, for which the dying Mother had been always remarkable, did not forsake her now, and she replied: ""I say nothing, for I am not able to do or say anything."

Some of the Sisters placed themselves on their knees by her bedside, supplicating her to give them some advice regarding their spiritual advancement, promising if she would to remember her during life. She merely said: "I have nothing else to recommend to you except to be faithful to your holy Rules and observances." These were her last words. And they are a summary of her long and laborious life in religion. She exhorted all the Sisters to imitate what they had always seen her practice. She expired sweetly on February 25, 1709. She was seventy-five years old, and lived in the Monastery of Vannes for twenty-five years. To satisfy the devotion of the people her body was not buried until the third day. The Marquis du Plessis had her remains enclosed in a leaden coffin; her heart was placed in the wall that separates the choir from the ante-choir of the Religious. Her memory was held in great veneration in Vannes. The Annals of that house furnish numerous testimonials of this. Her virtues, her foundations, her supernatural gifts prove her to have been one of the greatest Religious of the Institute.

CHAPTER III

SUPERIORITY OF MOTHER M. OF THE INFANT JESUS FEGER AND MOTHER M. OF SAINT VINCENT LORES

NEVER did a Sister appear better prepared to fulfill the office of superior than Mother M. of the Infant Jesus Feger. Elected at the time Mother Heurtant was deposed no one, perhaps, had to bear such heavy crosses, and according to the Annals there was never one more completely stranded. Niece of Madame de Kervegan, foundress of Guingamp, she followed this venerable relative to Rennes when she came to seek consolation from Mother M. of the Trinity at the time of her daughter's death. It was there that she became acquainted with this great Religious, and then determined to consecrate herself to God in that house.

By her ability in the management of affairs, notwithstanding her youth, Mlle. Feger explained away many difficulties regarding the foundation of the Monastery of Guingamp. It was she, also, that accompanied the Sisters on their journey for the beginning of this house. Her intimate relations with such generous souls greatly edified her. Soon after the foundation was an accomplished fact she was admitted to the novitiate, and thus became the first novice in the new convent.

Soon after Mother M. of the Trinity made a journey to Caen, and brought her to this first monastery; she left her there that she might finish her novitiate, and acquire at the fountain head of the Order that spirit that belonged to the Institute. The Blessed Eudes was living at that time; Sister M. of the Infant Jesus heard his last instructions. She was initiated by the first Mothers to keeping the Rules exactly, and as secretary there was nothing kept secret from her.

We shall find later on how much service she rendered in Paris during the beginning of the foundation of Saint Pelagie. She went back to Guingamp before the departure of the Sisters of Paris, and after the death of the Assistant, Sister M. of the Holy Spirit, she governed in capacity of *Commise* for three months. At that time she was only twenty-four years old. It was under her provisory administration, and partly through her ability, that the purchase of land belonging to the Jacobins was achieved. This purchase enabled the monastery to enlarge its quarters, and gave hopes of having later on a magnificent enclosure.

The superiors sent her with Mother Heurtant to help on the foundation of Vannes. She had lived in all the houses of the Institute then in existence. Notwithstanding her youth she was always looked up to by the Sisters.

In the interior, her government was quiet and peaceful with the Sisters, but it was not so outside. The sending away of a novice, whom the Marchioness du Plessis had taken as her protege, became for Mother M. of the Infant Jesus an occasion of violent contradictions. A domestic, who had great power over the mind of the foundress, made use of this incident to poison her mind against the monastery, and this good lady took away, some time later, one of the large properties she had given them. The friends of the Community and Mother Heurtant, herself, counselled her to bend to the storm, and after her deposition she retired to the monastery of her profession.

In Guingamp new and even harder trials awaited her, for they came from the interior of the Community. Sister Feger having taken the part of her relative, Mme. des Arcis, the superiors treated her very severely. These crosses ended by detaching her from this earth. During the long sojourn that she made in the infirmary before her death she showed her great charity by relieving those Sisters who were suffering more than herself. Her greatest desire was to be able to make a retreat with Mother M. of Saint Isidore, at that time the superior, but her infirmities prevented her. She just finished making a general confession when inflammation of the throat deprived her of the use of speech. She died on November 19, 1699, being only forty-two years old, but she could say with Ruth, that the All-Powerful had filled her with much bitterness.

Mother M. of Saint Vincent Lores had been elected in her place. She was a conquest of Mother M. of the Trinity. The life of this Sister shows the great ascendency this holy Religious exercised.

Mlle. Lores de Multeau was of a distinguished family of Malestroit. While yet very young God made known to her that her mother's death was very near; after the realization of this prophetic vision she was subjected to the hardest and most humiliating treatment in the house of her guardian. She supported all this with unalterable patience. Freed at length from her guardian's supervision she resolved to give herself entirely to piety and other good works, and went to Vannes, where she placed herself under the direction of the Jesuit Fathers, and in particular of Father Huby, and under such favorable auspices it is not to be wondered at that she made rapid strides in the ways of perfection.

It was at this time that Mlle. de Francheville founded the Work of the Congregation of the Ladies of the Retreat. Mlle. Lores was her companion and helper in her labors. So after the death of this zealous servant of God she could furnish the most intimate and most precious information regarding her heroic virtues. Mlle. Lores occupied the position of econome in the house; it was in this capacity that she received the Sisters for the foundations of Hennebont and Guingamp, in 1675. She told Mother Heurtant how anxious she was to be a Religious. By a prophetic intuition this Mother told her one day that she would see her generous aspirations realized, but that the moment had not yet struck for that grand event.

Does not that hospitality extended at the Retreat suppose that relations had already existed between the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity of Rennes and the foundresses of that establishment? We think so. Mlle. de Francheville in her journeys to Rennes had met Mother M. of the Trinity. Hers was too important a personality in the city to be unknown to her. Neither had Father Huby been without visiting the Religious who had come to his native town to make so useful a foundation. It is more than probable that he knew at that time of the propagation of the devotion to the Sacred Hearts through the daughters of the Blessed Eudes.

At the time of Mother Heurtant's arrivel in Vannes Mlle. Lores opened her heart to her again. This directress was inspired once more to assure her that the Will of God was that she should become a Religious of Our Lady of Charity. Mlle. de Francheville made the most serious objections to this, as she depended very much on the charity and zeal of her faithful companion. She explained the trouble such a separation would cause her, but before the formal decision made by Mother Heurtant, that it was God's Will, she bowed to the inevitable as well as M. de Kerlivio and Father Huby. Divine inspiration alone could have enabled two such able and experienced directors to allow her to change her vocation. What authority did not Mother Heurtant have over them when she spoke to them of the advantages and excellence of the devotion to the Sacred Hearts!

Mlle. Lores was forty-five years old when she took the habit on July 1, 1685. On the day of the reception Mlle. de Francheville gave 2,000 livres to the monastery, besides many other gifts, to prove her attachment to her faithful friend. The novice applied herself with renewed ardor in the acquisition of perfection. She submitted herself with the simplicity of a young postulant of fifteen years to all the small observances imposed by her new Rule.

Her superiority was remarkable by the benedictions that God showered upon the monastery. The agents of the Exchequer imposed a ruinous tax upon them of more than 8,000 livres. After making a novena for God's help in this matter an unknown person made an effort to obtain a considerable reduction, and happily succeeded. This incident of tax or duty bears some resemblance to the unjust laws that are even now in full swing in France. We must know that fifteen years after its foundation the House of Vannes counted forty Religious and as many Penitents. The admission of the Penitents was always gratuitous, and consequently a heavy charge.

The circulars of the time give consoling examples of their fervor and mortification, and also mention the happy deaths of eight among them. Very often it would seem, the Holy Virgin recompensed their confidence by veritable miracles. One of the inmates had a deep and horrible sore. At the end of a novena it completely disappeared. The Divine assistance was not less sensibly felt in the direction of the undisciplined. Several projected attempts at escape had been overthrown, being discovered at the moment when they were putting their design in execution, and of course the guilty ones were covered with confusion at being caught in the act. Sister M. of the Incarnation Cadiou, one of the foundresses of the monastery, was the instrument of all this good, and by her zeal and holiness attracted all those favors from Heaven.

Madame the Marchioness du Plessix was not long before she recognized the wickedness of the woman who was so black against the monastery; after having sent for her she took her to her own apartments. She had been afflicted with dropsy; her life was in serious danger when, on the feast of the Holy Heart of Mary, she commenced a novena with the Community. The last day she recovered her health. It was not the only favor obtained by this lady. She enriched the altar of the miraculous statue with numerous offerings. This fact and several others related in the Annals make us certain that this miraculous statue symbolized for the Community and for the faithful the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Under the episcopacy of Bishop d'Argouge the canonical visits, so useful for the conservation of regularity in Communities, were periodically made. This prelate made one visit in person, and gave the Sisters numerous tokens of esteem and affection. Under the superiority of Mother M. of Saint Vincent, Reverend M. de Chalons, Vicar-General and Superior of the Monastery, twice acquitted himself of this duty. His recommendations bore mostly on the Divine Office; he praised the vigilance of the superioress, who maintained the observance with such integrity.

During the whole time of her government, Mother M. of Saint Vincent had to combat against excessive timidity; and it was with the greatest pleasure she saw her time of deposition draw near, and submitted anew to a life of obedience. She strove to render herself useful by her exactitude in acquitting herself of the employments confided to her. Her activity and experience in the different labors were very advantageous, especially in the buildings that were put up during the years 1703 and 1704.

Towards the end of her life, notwithstanding her persevering efforts in attaining perfection, the fear of the judgments of God took violent possession of her soul. The Lord wished thus to oblige her to hold herself in readiness to respond to His call. Her death was sudden, but not unprovided. Father Berger, Rector of the Jesuit College, gave a beautiful testimonial during a visit he made to the Mother Superior on that occasion: "You have sustained a great loss! Mother M. of Saint Vincent was the purest soul, the most upright and the most humble that I have ever known. She was a saint. When I noticed during her last retreat that she was vividly struck with the fear of the Divine judgments I dared to prophesy to her that God would take care to hide from her the hour of her death, as it has happened." This death, so precious before God and men, took place on December 12, 1710. Mother Lores was seventy years old, and worked for her sanctification in the Order for twenty-five years.

CHAPTER IV

SUPERIORITY OF MOTHER M. OF THE TRINITY LE REBOURS DE VAUMADEUC, AND MOTHER M. OF THE ANNUNCIATION LE REBOURS DE VAUMADEUC—CONVERSION OF A PROTESTANT—GROWTH OF THE MONASTERY—DEATH OF SISTER M. OF THE INCARNATION CADIOU

At the Ascension, 1701, the young Sister M. of the Trinity le Rebours de Vaumadeuc was elected superioress. She governed the house many years alternately with her sister, Mother M. of the Annunciation. It was under their governments that the monastery grew and prospered.

The family of Vaumadeuc belonged to Saint Brieuc, and was distinguished by its high rank. The mother of these young ladies remained a widow, although she was quite young when her husband died; she occupied herself exclusively with the education of her children, and strove above all else to give them a good example and imbue them with the love of all Christian virtues. Her devotion to them was crowned with happy success, for four of her daughters became Religious in the Order of Our Lady of Charity of Vannes. It was from listening to the sermons of Reverend M. de Luduge, a celebrated missionary, that the eldest felt she was called to higher things, possibly to the religious life. She wished then to enter the Poor Clares of Dinan, where she had a relation of her own. But on account of the delicacy of her health, and the counsels of her confessor being against that convent, she turned her eyes to the Order of Our Lady of Charity. Father de Luduge had a great veneration for Mother Heurtant, and told her what Mlle. le Rebours was contemplating. With her ordinary supernatural intuitions Mother Heurtant understood at once that the person in question was a choice plant sent by God to be nurtured in the garden of the Order, and she neglected nothing that would further the plan that Father de Luduge unfolded to her. Meantime Madame le Rebours came to Vannes to hold a process in the Parliament of Brittany. The eulogiums that she heard about Mother Heurtant inspired her with the desire of visiting her, and gradually yielding to her gracious manner she casually mentioned that her eldest daughter was seriously thinking of joining a religious Order. Mother M. of the Trinity urged her not to put any obstacle in her way, since it was the will of God; but maternal tenderness was not so easily overcome. Informed of all this, Father de Luduge brought Mlle. le Rebours to Vannes, and she joined her prayers with those of Mother Heurtant; all these prayers, together with the faith of the good Mother, forced from Madame a not unwilling consent.

Soon after the entrance of Mlle. le Rebours into the novitiate the demon strove to discourage her, and showed her in all its hideous deformity the utter poverty of the monastery, and the slight hope that was held out of a better condition of things, even in the distant future. While these thoughts had well-nigh overwhelmed her during meditation Mother Heurtant made her a sign to follow her out of the choir, and sitting down with her after a very homely fashion she talked a long time with her on the love of our Lord for holy poverty; then taking her to an open window that overlooked the gardens of the enclosure of the convent she assured her that a little later a beautiful new monastery would be built there.

The realization of such a prophecy appeared impossible, even in the dim future; however, the novice overcame this temptation, and generously made her sacrifice to God. As superioress she did not delay in realizing the vision of Mother Heurtant. She was named Directress of the Novitiate while very young; she there gained the esteem and affection of the Sisters, who placed her at the head when she attained the canonical age. Heaven seemed to favor all she did, if we may credit the marvelous recitals in the Annals. It is certain that her government was wonderfully blessed.

We shall mention at first the sincere and miraculous conversion of a celebrated Protestant. The details of this fact would suffice alone to prove the excellence and Divine origin of Catholicism. Jane Cousson belonged to Saint-Mexsant, in Poitou. Louis XIV, in pursuance of his political views concerning religious unity throughout his Kingdom, made it difficult for those of opposite views, and some of them secretly decided to leave the country. Jane Cousson was one of this number; she tried to get to England with several of her coreligionists. She was arrested at Saint-Malo with her companions, and all were brought to Rennes. In this city, so deeply Catholic, they excited the curiosity of the people, and the charity of a great number. Bishop de Lavardin sent the most learned Religious to strive to convince them of their errors, but without producing the slightest results; they would not be convinced. The first President of the Parliament ordered them to be dispersed throughout the different Communities of Rennes and Vannes. This order was executed much to the disgust of those Communities, for they had a great repugnance to having anything to do with them. It is incredible how many persons complained of this. According to the Annals of Vannes they enjoyed much liberty in those monasteries, and many privileges.

Jane Cousson, the most obstinate and the most educated among them, was brought to the Charity of Vannes by two keepers during the octave of the feast of the Sacred Heart. Her tall figure and masculine appearance terrified the Sisters. When she entered she refused any mark of respect to any one, even to the superioress. The Sister Portress, quite original in her speech, could not hinder herself from saying to her, that according to French custom, in use in the Community, they should speak to the superior on their knees, through respect for God, Whom she represents. Jane replied very dryly that she never would go on her knees except to God. Mother le Rebours sweetly replied to her: "You are right; we do not require any such thing of you. Moreover, we shall never speak to you of your religion; you must feel perfectly free to do as you will in that regard; but on one condition; that on your side you shall not treat of religion with any one in this house." Happy with the promise of being left alone Jane willingly promised to leave others alone, too.

Sister M. of Saint Charles le Rebours had charge of the linen-room, and of bringing those engaged there to the lectures that were given in the Community. In listening to the reading of the "Lives of the Saints" this obstinate Protestant found the germ of her conversation. Soon afterwards a great trouble overshadowed her quailing soul; so she begged permission of the Mother Superior to dispense her from those exercises, and even the permission to take her meals in her chamber, so as to forget all that she heard, and run no further risk of hearing those wonderful stories that made her shrink into herself. The Mother replied: "I cannot dispense you from the common life, and you should be satisfied to be left quiet."

On their side, the Community did not cease to multiply their prayers, their mortifications, their vows, and all their labors to obtain of Heaven the grace of her conversion. So her troubles ever increased. Jane was willing to listen to the discourses of Father Andrie, Jesuit. After three months of continuous efforts on his part he felt entirely discouraged, but did not wish to allow her to perceive it; finally, Jane absolutely refused to listen to him. It was only after difficult maneuvering that Mother M. of the Trinity le Rebours brought them together to continue their arguments. During their conversation Mother sent several Sisters to pray before the Blessed Sacrament that our Lord would touch her hard heart. At length this boon was granted to their persevering efforts; at last her convictions were shaken, and poor Jane herself often prayed thus: "My God, do not permit that I should be wrong; show me what religion I should embrace; I do not wish to follow any religion except the true one."

It belonged to the Holy Virgin to put the finishing stroke to this wondrous conversion. During Mass on the feast of the Assumption Jane found herself in the ante-choir, when all at once a luminous idea occurred to her mind; so vivid was this ray from the Holy Spirit that, like Saint Paul on the way to Damascus, she looked for some one to whom she could unbosom herself. Meeting a poor invalid who had to get the air she said to her very eagerly: "Now, my Sister, I am yours; I want to be a daughter of the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church; I submit myself to it unreservedly." In the excess of her emotion she fell on her knees.. When she became a little calmer the Sister brought her to a window from which they had a good view of the miraculous statue of the Virgin; and from that point of vantage they both heard the rest of the Mass. When the Mother Superior came out Jane, our happy Jane, made the same declaration she had made to the dear sick Sister, and of course the happy Assumption news traveled fast through the house that morning, and the joy was universal.

From that blessed morning God strengthened the faith of the new convert, sending her lights and graces in abundance. Some days before she made her abjuration Jane assisted at a Mass and general Communion, and watched all the proceedings with great attention, especially when the Sisters went to the Holy Table. All at once she fell unconscious to the ground.

She was carried to the refectory: her countenance had the pallor of death. After having recovered her consciousness she pronounced several disconnected sentences: "Oh, my Mother, I never doubted!" or "Ah, what I have seen!" When she grew calmer she told what happened: "What a grace God has given to me! I was looking at the Sisters going to Holy Communion. When they approached the Holy Table I knew them all; when they returned I did not recognize one of them, for each had such a light around her head and spread over her face that it was impossible for me to distinguish one from another. When Communion was over I turned my eyes towards the ciborium, and I saw two angels bowing on either side, their wings unfolded, and there was a beautiful circle of light around the head of the priest. It was at that moment, seized with terror, that I fell, overcome with fear and weakness. Ah, I did not require so great a grace to make me believe in the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament. But, my dear Mother, I have a great favor to ask of you, as well as of the whole Community; I do not know if you will grant it to me. It is this: Keep me in your Community the rest of my natural existence." "Willingly," responded the Mother Superior. "God granted you this grace, even before you made the request, for to obtain your conversion we made a vow to do so." Touched by this unexpected kindness and filled with a lively gratitude, this poor girl fell on her knees, crying out: "My God! How many graces have you bestowed upon such a miserable creature as I am!"

Jane Cousson made her abjuration on the feast of the Nativity of Our Lady and from that time she applied herself with an ever-increasing fervor to the practice and the acquisition of all the virtues. She edified the monastery, and five years later her perseverance was crowned with a happy death.

After her conversion the indifference of two of her former companions, who were kept in the hospital at Vannes, gave her much pain; she frequently reproached herself with strengthening them in their errors. She wrote a touching letter to them, a letter teeming with the knowledge of all the graces of which she had been the recipient, and also giving them the motives of her change of religion:

My very dear Sisters:

After having been deprived a long time of the pleasure of writing to you I take this opportunity to do so, as well as to make known to you the joy and consolation that God has been pleased to send me. Will my letter cause you sorrow, since you do not share my sentiments? However, I must take the lead in this matter, for my conscience and the charity I feel for you dictate to me at the present moment. You know I love you as if you were in very deed my sisters, and naturally I am anxious to see you open your eyes to the truth. I beg of you not to oppose the Holy Spirit when He speaks to you, as I had done for a long time, merely out of human respect, fearing that after refusing the graces of God He might swear in His anger that you shall never enjoy repose.

You say to me, perhaps, that this language surprises you, after the many fine things I used to say to comfort others who felt drawn towards the Catholic Church, so as to prevent them joining it. This is what has kept me back so long; I did not wish to give in; human respect had such a hold on me, I could not make up my mind to acknowledge myself defeated.

I must acknowledge to you that the reflections I made on the sermons I heard delivered by Protestant ministers were in a great measure the reason of my quitting that sect. M. de Moulin, in his sermon on the Second Chapter of Saint Luke, recognized Saint Augustine as a great doctor of the primitive Church. Why, then, did he not, like Saint Augustine, who said Mass, pray for the souls in Purgatory and recognize the Pope as the universal head of the Church, the successor of Saint Peter, the Vicar of Jesus Christ? This holy Father and Doctor of the Church said also that when he quitted the ranks of heresy he became a *Roman* Catholic—he left Babylon; while those ministers told us that Rome was Babylon.

M. de Moulin said in the same sermon that the Christians of the primitive Church carried the Communion, or the Lord's Supper, to the sick, not from the priest's house and every hour of the day, but from the Holy Table, and at the same time when the others partook of it. . . . They recognized, then, that there were priests in the Church, and that they gave Communion to the sick. Why, then, have they abolished that custom?

M. Daille said, in his apology, that those that could not drink the wine, should not, for that reason, be deprived of Communion, but that they could communicate under one species of bread. Why, then, so many loud cries against the retrenching of the *Cup*, since they, themselves, gave Communion under one species?

I remarked, also, in the sermon from the First Chapter of the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Romans, he said that the crosier of the Church had not the same virtue in the hands of Giesi as in that of Elisius; he acknowledged, then, that God performed miracles by the hands of Elisius; those, then, who did these miracles ought to have the Staff of Elisius—that is to say, the living faith and a firm confidence in the words of

Jesus Christ, when He said to His Disciples: "Cure the sick, raise the dead, give sight to the blind, pursue devils." I have never known those ministers to perform any miracles; the Staff of Elisius has no virtue in their hands. . . .

M. de Moulin said also in a sermon that the first Christians called the day on which was celebrated the death of the martyrs the day of their birth, which gave me reason to believe that those days were honored as their feastdays. So, then, the primitive Church prayed to the saints, and celebrated their feasts.

Jane also related briefly the circumstances of her conversion. Today Catholics and Protestants are very far from having that religious knowledge we find in this letter. Unhappily, the impression she endeavored to make was not deep enough to bring about the conversion of those who received it. They remained as they were; they had not the courage of their convictions, and could not make their abjuration.

Facts of such importance attracted attention to the monastery, and excited the generosity of pious souls. At that time there were some foundations for Penitent women, and Mother le Rebours got considerable means to build on a larger scale. The need was most urgent. During the summer of 1702 a violent storm nearly buried the Community under its ruins. The rooms were so scanty that Mother le Rebours was obliged to refuse several good subjects.

The first stone of the new building, blessed on March 23, 1703, was laid by a poor little child in the name of the Infant Jesus, and by Jane Cousson, the new convert, in the name of the Blessed Virgin. These august founders showed their appreciation of the honor done them by protecting the workmen during the time the structure was going up. Several would have been killed, if by a divine intervention they had not escaped danger.

The Sisters entered their new house in 1706. Mother le Rebours then thought of transferring the chapel into the apartment originally intended to be the choir for the Religious. Her laudable proposal was opposed by the reflection that they should first raise up spiritual temples, then later on the material structure. This beautiful spot was then selected for the boarding school. Some days later our Lord made to the Mother Superior during meditation, out of His excessive condescension, very sharp reproaches: "What!" He said to her interiorly, "after all the means that My paternal goodness has furnished you with to build this house, you are not disquieted at heart for having given Me the most unworthy spot—Me who am your God! Do you wish Me beneath the feet of the Penitents?" (The church was at that time underneath the classes.) Overwhelmed by these reproaches, and all bathed in tears, Mother M. of the Trinity le Rebours could only reply: "Lord, what would you have me do?" When she grew more calm she told our Divine Master that she was not and had not been free to act according to her desire, and that now the near approach of her deposition would render it impossible for her to finish the work. This self-justification was not accepted by the mysterious Voice that spoke to her. The reproaches became so vehement that she was incapable of resisting them very long, so Mother le Rebours went to her apartment, and at once took measures for the work, found an unexpected facility in appropriating everything to fulfil the desires of the Voice. She called the contractor, explained to him her design, and bade him set himself to look up the material for the immediate construction; the good man set himself to look up the materials, and at once acknowledged to her that nothing more was required.

More and more surprised and astounded at such marks of God's Will in this affair the Mother Superior called her counsellors, and related to them all that had transpired. The venerated Mother Heurtant felt great consolation, and embracing her spiritual daughter encouraged her to pursue her enterprise. These plans were then executed with so much celerity that on May 28, 1707, Saturday before the Ascension, less than forty days after the vision that we have related, the new sanctuary was ready to be blessed by M. the Abbe de la Chateigneraie de Marzan, Vicar-General of Bishop d'Argouge.

The fervor of the Sisters, and the eminent holiness of some of them, merited many favors from Heaven. The Annals of that time contain several interesting revelations, especially one where it is related that a Lay-Sister, who had died, appeared, asking for prayers. We also find the account of some cures obtained through the intercession of the Blessed Eudes. Before commencing, the Annalist said, this good Father had asked God for this foundation to recompense his labors, and recalls that the necessary permissions were granted only four months prior to his death, contrary to all human expectation. Here is the recital:

A young professed had received the Last Sacraments; all the symptoms of approaching death were visible on her countenance; they had already lit the blessed candle, when Mother Superior, who regretted the near approach of death for such a promising subject, was inwardly inspired to make a vow to Saint Mathurin, or to Blessed Regis, or to the Blessed Eudes. She wished to know if the dying Sister, although somewhat delirious, would join her petition with theirs, and she asked her to which of the three would she make the solemn promise. She quickly replied, and without appearing to be conscious: "To the good Father Eudes." The Mother Superior commenced the novena; the fever immediately abated, and in a short time she was fully recovered.

A novice had some nose trouble, quite natural, but very unpleasant for those around her; full of confidence she made a vow to adorn the picture of Blessed Eudes with a gilt frame if she would be cured before her profession. The aid of this Blessed Father was not invoked in vain; the infirmity soon disappeared.

Divine Providence was pleased to recompense the confidence of the Sisters by a miraculous multiplication of their provisions. One day when the Community was giving dinner to some of the millers belonging to the foundress the Sister Cook forgot not only to put on more vegetables, but, by oversight, cooked less meat than usual. After having told her troubles to the Mother Superior, for she certainly felt herself in an embarrassing position, what was her surprise to be able to furnish the whole house, including all the strangers present, with an abundant meal.

In two other circumstances a Touriere Sister could procure only a few oysters, scarcely enough for a meal for ten persons, and at that time there were in the house one hundred and thirty. The cook, a good holy Religious, made a stew of these oysters, and they were found quite sufficient for the household.

Many other facts, more or less supernatural, go to prove how agreeable this monastery was to God.

At the end of the two triennials of Mother M. of the Trinity le Rebours de Vaumadeuc her younger sister, Mary of the Annunciation, was elected. The burden of superiority appeared to her entirely beyond her strength, and she soon fell ill of a languor. The prayers of the Sisters to Saint Joseph obtained her recovery, but her health was never completely restored, so at the end of her first triennial she begged the Sisters not to think of placing her there again.

During her superiority a young boarder died the death of a saint; her name was Madeline Gardin. This pious child had aunts who were Religious in the monasteries of Rennes and Vannes. Her mother placed her in the latter house when she was eight or nine years old; at that time she was remarkable for her piety and fear of God. She made her First Communion with great fervor, and after that event she never approached the Holy Table without disposing herself well for this great act by ardent prayers and by the practice of such mortifications as her tender age permitted.

Seeing her holy dispositions Mother Heurtant remarked to her aunt that God evidently had particular designs on the child. He wished to advance the work of her sanctification by calling her to Himself. Mlle. Gardin was attacked one year previous to her death with an illness that exercised her patience, but it was impossible from the beginning to alleviate her sufferings. Her unfailing patience made the rest of her life an edifying example of heroic fortitude and patient resignation. This innocent soul believed herself very guilty, and was continually disquieted regarding the troubles she imagined she had caused the Sisters, and often begged the infirmarian to convey her excuses to them.

Seeing her illness increase in intensity she solicited the favor of pronouncing the vows of holy religion. This grace was granted her according to the ordinary conditions exacted in the Custom-Book. At the moment of making her choice of a name she hesitated about taking that of Madeline, which she already bore, saying: "That name must be kept for my sister, who will be a Religious, and will want that name." The future realized this prophecy; her sister, who appeared to be a candidate for the honors and pleasures of the world, embraced the religious life, nevertheless, and asked for the name of Madeline, without having any previous knowledge of what her sister had formerly said.

After having pronounced her vows, the little Sister turned to her aunt, and said to her, recalling the words of Mother Heurtant: "Behold the great things that God has accomplished in me." She desired them to place the religious habit on her bed, and casually remarked that they had forgotten the scapular; she begged the Sister Directress to be her mistress, so she could do nothing without permission. The novices came to see her, and gave her the kiss of peace as if she were one of their companions. All this took place while she was suffering excruciatingly, but no one could imagine such bodily suffering under an exterior that appeared so ravishingly happy. Noticing the sorrow depicted on her aunt's countenance the dear little spouse of Christ, through kindness and delicacy, asked to die when her aunt would not be near her bed. God heard her petition, and contemplated calling her to Himself on the feast of Saint Magdalen de Pazzi, her patroness.

The Annals relate several other conversions among the Penitents. One of them had concealed a mortal sin in her confession. Notwithstanding this sacrilege she intended to go to Holy Communion, but when the moment came for her to go to the Holy Table she was unable to leave her place. An invisible hand restrained her. Terrified at the occurrence, she entered into herself, acknowledged her fault and lived a good life afterwards.

Divine Providence prevented many attempted escapes which had been skilfully planned. This divine care was particularly extended to the Sisters who were responsible for the Penitents. It was often remarked that when the Sisters entered on their duties they were completely delivered from the slightest temptation against the angelical virtue.

In 1710 Mother M. of the Trinity took up again the reins of government. Shortly after she was called upon to close the eyes of Madame de Vaumadeuc, her mother. This lady, after seeing four of her daughters consecrate themselves to God in the monastery, retired there herself two months later. Her piety enlightened her sufficiently to understand the obligations of her daughters; rather than see them fail in the exercises of the Community she preferred to be deprived of seeing them for days at a time. The fatigues consequent on attending the exercises of a retreat hastened her death.

During this second superiority Mother M. of the Trinity grieved over the loss of the respected Mothers M. of Saint Vincent Lores and M. of the Heart of Jesus Bedault; but she had the consolation of seeing the Monastery of La Rochelle begun in 1714.

Bishop d'Argouge, on account of a certain attachment to the Community, delayed this foundation. He had this same affection up to his death for that house; he died on March 16, 1716. Bishop de Berite, who took his place, showed the same thoughtfulness and affection for the Sisters. He loved to say Mass in their chapel, on account of the Confraternity of the

Sacred Heart, of which he was a member. His condescending kindness towards the Sisters made him hold an ordination there, and a consecration of the sacred altar-stones. He also had inserted in the book entitled "The Institutes of the Church" all that concerned the Order of Our Lady of Charity, with the portrait of Sister M. of the Infant Jesus de Soulebieu. The notices written by this prelate commences thus: "The Order of Our Lady of Charity is dedicated to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. It is their charity that inspired the fourth vow of the Religious."*

This fourth vow was zealously exercised in the monastery. About the time when Bishop de Berite arrived to take possession of his See they received there a poor creature who was one of a band of robbers. On her entrance grace knocked loudly at the heart of the poor woman, and she admitted the light. However, she returned to her former obduracy, and during the space of two years her conversion appeared impossible. After this long sojourn in the house she fell dangerously ill; the Sisters prayed day and night for her conversion. She refused the Last Sacraments; when they actually despaired of her salvation she, herself, manifested the most lively sentiments of contrition. This spectacle was very consoling to the Sisters. The poor creature was grateful, and told them that she owed her salvation to them. When the Blessed Sacrament was brought into her cell she wanted to make a public confession of her crimes, and in so doing make an honorable amend to the God of Mercy. To do this she wished to go on her knees with a rope around her neck. She did not die of this illness; hardly recovered, notwithstanding her weakness, she asked permission to perform all sorts of austerities. This proved to her companions her sincerity and complete change of heart; she kept strictly to this mode of life, to make reparation for the faults and sins of her life; this was very touching in a person so rabidly irreligious in her former days. Her humility and compunction never changed. Her death took place on December 8, 1713. The Immaculate Virgin doubtless wished to give her, herself, the assurance of pardon.

Mother M. of the Annunciation had succeeded her sister in office at the Ascension, 1716. It was she who received in the convent Bishop de Tressan, who was passing through to occupy the See of Nantes. The benevolence of this prelate filled the Sisters with hope; the Annals say naively, that the good he accomplished at Nantes could not be sufficiently praised; it had gained him a kind of envy. Bishop de Caumartin, who succeeded him, showed how edified he was by the regularity he found in the monastery; he had been only a short time in Vannes. In 1719 he was named Bishop of Blois.

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* We have found out the family name of that Bishop. He was called Timothy. It was, perhaps, the same that had been sent to China as an envoy.

Under the episcopate of Bishop Fagon, who governed the diocese from 1720 to 1742, the monastery was not so happy. This Bishop evidently had Jansenistic tendencies, and, perhaps, had been prejudiced against the Blessed Eudes. His first visit to the convent was an occasion of great disorder, for he allowed a number of people to go through the cloister. Happily, Mother le Rebours, warned of what he was allowing in other Communities, took precautions that nothing could be taken away, and that the Penitents would be safely housed. The recital of this visit of the prelate was perfectly understood; his character was compelling, and his authority was not to be criticised. The relations he had with this convent continued to bear the impress of his high-handed authority, and occasioned great trouble and much suffering.

On May 21, 1722, Mother M. of the Trinity le Rebours was reelected for the fifth time. Some weeks after she had the sorrow to lose the generous foundress of the monastery. For more than thirty years this pious lady had lived the most edifying life imaginable. The sketch we have of her shows her to have been a most Christian woman. She made an exhaustive study of the relations that should exist between lord and vassal. According to her views the relations should be an extensive one — a family relationship, so to say, between landed proprietors and their tenants, the former being penetrated with a sense of their duties towards the latter; this would cement the bond of confidence and mutual affection; the peasantry would be full of respect for the goodness and kindness of their masters. This explains the inverse reception the revolutionary reformers met with from the Breton country people.

Here is the inscription placed on the tomb of the foundress in the convent chapel:

Here lies the high and mighty lady, Anne de Goulayne, Marchioness of du Plessix Josso, of Rosmadec and other places, foundress of this monastery; deceased there, and interred here on July 8, 1722, aged eighty-two years. Her life was full of virtue and merit; she was signalized by her true piety, her charity towards the poor, and her affection and tenderness for this house, which she founded, and on which she bestowed her benefits.

The monastery had much trouble in obtaining the legacy she left it in her will. All efforts would have been fruitless without the aid of Sister M. of the Trinity de Rosmadec, for by her zeal and perseverance she succeeded in getting it.

This name de Rosmadec suggests an observation: Sister M. of the Trinity was the granddaughter of the deceased. Ordinarily, two Religious in the same monastery do not bear the same name. But the reputation for holiness that was attached to Mother M. of the Trinity Heurtant was such that they derogated from the common usage in Vannes for a long time; we find there at least three Religious called Mary of the Trinity.

Bishop Fagon afflicted the Community very much that year (1722) by some measures that he took: he forbade the Jesuit Fathers to perform the functions of their ministry in the religious houses of his diocese. Since the foundation of this house those Fathers had been in constant demand, and had given their services as well as being extraordinary confessors there. The Sisters had established the custom which had been settled for all time, hence of obligation, that every two weeks a Jesuit Father should give an exhortation to the Penitents. His Lordship ordered, in this case, that only two Religious could assist thereat, and all the others should leave the chapel during the sermon. This prohibition was not raised until after the death of that Bishop in 1742.

The Community had for confessor for a long time one Father Vincent, who gave his time and service until his death, which occurred in 1727, and was a signal for great difficulties. His successor did not gain the general confidence, and imposed a fearful trial upon Mother M. of the Annunciation, who had been reelected. He dispensed the Sisters from meditation and the Offices whenever their employments caused them unusual fatigue. The Mother deposed, M. of the Trinity, believed it her duty to represent those doings to Bishop Fagon, who changed the confessor. Immediately, a change for the better was perceivable in the Community.

Mother M. of the Annunciation lived only a few months after these events. On Good Friday she wanted to perform a public act of mortification in the refectory. But in going upstairs to her room she could not help saying to Sister M. of the Trinity: "I'll soon throw you my hair-shirt," meaning, of course, the superiority. After that she found it impossible to walk around; she was not able to descend to the choir on Easter Sunday, and eight days after she died making acts of abondonment to the Divine Mercy.

The life of this good Mother has not been conserved in the Annals; we can, however, judge that, like her sister, she was one of the fine superiors of the Institute.

Some weeks later Mother M. of the Trinity was re-elected; she had been out of office just a year. She had the consolation of receiving into the novitiate ten postulants, in the year 1730; they were very talented and virtuous. It was a great help for all the employments, and at the same time the temporal means of the house was enlarged by their dowries. Those favors were attributed to Saint Joseph, to whom the Community addressed fervent prayers. It was a great happiness for Mother le Rebours when she received the letters of convocation for the General Assembly of 1734. She went, accompanied by Sister M. of Jesus-Dying Dubois, and was pleased to see the most perfect uniformity established in the Institute. The Annals of Caen tell us that the presence of those two Sisters in that monastery excited among them all a greater devotion to the Sacred Hearts. The reader will not be surprised at this, for it has been shown conclusively that the Monastery of Vannes had exercised a very active and fruitful apostolate in the spread of this devotion in that city.

In the notice of the death in 1732 of Sister M. of the Trinity Peseron we see that she composed a sacred chant for the Offices of the Sacred Hearts. There are many reasons for crediting the celebrated Father Beurrier with finding the germs of his vocation to the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in this devotion. After his ordination he preached in the monastery at the profession of his only sister, Mary of Saint Anne Beurrier. It was through a mistake that the author of the "Models of the Clergy" had shown that this particular Religious was a member of the Hospitalers of Vannes. She was professed in the Order of Our Lady of Charity, and died on September 28, 1754, quite young in years, but already ripe for heaven. She had been partly educated in the convent and early manifested the desire of consecrating herself to God.

Her brother, in his discourse at her profession, commented on those words formerly addressed to Abraham: "*Egredere de . . . cognatione tua, et veni in terram quam monstravero tibi.* Go you forth from your family, and come to the land that I will show you." (Genesis, 12.) He made an able application of these words, which proved the degree of eloquence to which he later attained.

He spoke then to the Sisters concerning the glorious attributes of the Divine Heart of Jesus; he spoke with such unction that his audience was visibly moved. In this circumstance he showed how little he cared for the vain applause of men; instead of complimenting the Religious on their virtues and their good works he gave them lessons in humility. Explaining these words: "*Videbam Satanam sicut fulgur de coelo descendentem.* I saw Satan falling from heaven like lightning." (Saint Luke, 18.) He showed that the Savior wished His disciples to understand the meaning of His words: "Learn that those demons whom you drive, in My name, from possessed persons lost their place in heaven through their pride, and that you cannot replace them except in imitating the humility of Saint Michael and the other angels."

The author of his life states that he preached so well on the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary that he gained many souls to this devotion. It is naturally true to say that the prayers of his sister did a great deal for him, in return for the pious meditations he composed for her use during the octaves of those feasts.

All those facts, later by many years in their happenings, as they are dated in the year 1734, prove the ardor that increased daily during that period in the monastery. The devotion to the Sacred Hearts had been strongly planted there by the Sister Foundresses. The life of Sister M. of the Incarnation Cadiou, whose death occurred that year, furnish us with ample testimony. Her conversations with the Blessed Eudes have been already related. The long career of this fervent Religious contributed in a great measure to keep alive and to maintain this spirit of the founder in the monastery.

Having become a Choir-Sister, she occupied nearly all the charges of the house except that of superior. When they spoke to her of that charge she responded with an assurance that seemed to come from on High, that she never would be named, that it was impossible, since her novitiate was only a preparation for the office of cook. This was not so; she was in every way worthy, as the Jesuit Fathers had every opportunity of knowing.

Her care and the success she had in the charge of Mistress of the Penitents was very consolatory to her superiors, and they concluded to leave her in that employment. Sister M. of the Incarnation knew how to speak to those poor girls with forceful language; her sweetness and persuasive words made a lasting impression on them, and won them over to God. The greatest number of conversions and happy deaths already related, took place while she directed the Penitents. Hence, the authority she had for mentioning the graces God bestowed upon the Sisters occupied actively in the salvation of souls.

"I am assured that He bestows those graces," she said many time, while giving the catechism to our Sister Penitents. "God has made me taste the effects of His infinite goodness in pouring over my soul an interior peace and consolation that it is impossibe to express. I have never done anything to merit those graces. I live very naturally, losing interiorly much valuable time. One day I was in the choir with our Sister Penitents when I felt myself strongly inspired to recite the Office of the Immaculate Conception. On account of it being so long I felt disinclined to say it; in fact, had a secret repugnance even to begin it; however, feeling that a great grace would be the recompense for the recital of this prayer I said it, and presently and forever after every impression contrary to holy purity was annihilated within me."

Nothing indicates of what nature this singular privilege was, but this venerable Sister insinuates in her manner of expression that it was due more or less to this employment. Her testimonial is most precious for those especially who continue in this work of charity.

It is to be wondered at, at least casually, if this experienced directress did not sometimes feel the thorns and rude awakenings of this difficult employment. By the Annals, taken as a whole, it would seem that most persons who sought refuge in the monasteries were uneducated; in fact, less educated and more gross and unpolished than is generally found today. Hence, they were more obstinate and self-opinionated. Very often they were enclosed against their will, and had little hope of ever seeing the door of the Refuge opened to them. On the other hand, a legitimate and high authority obliged the Sisters to support them and take care of them, notwithstanding their wickedness. One of those poor souls had conceived such an aversion for her charitable mistress that her face became hideous when she caught sight of her. However, she could not deny that she was a saint; that she had discovered to her things known only to herself and God, and this very reason made the hatred so much more intense. By force of prayers and by dint of perseverance Sister M. of the Incarnation ended by gaining the heart that seemed like adamant, and was consoled by seeing her reconciled to God.

It would be difficult to tell precisely what virtue shone out most conspicuously in this venerable Sister. The author of her biography says:

> The oldest among our Sisters, who have known her and lived with her, are obliged to give her this testimony, which is the most glorious — capable, indeed, of canonizing her. Never did she fail in one *iota* of the Rule; her regularity has been exact to scrupulosity. We saw, not without the liveliest admiration, this venerated foundress practice all the little subjections taught in the novitiate, asking her permissions for the slightest things, going and coming through the monastery with the recollection usually seen during the grand silence. Persuaded, as she often repeated, that one single hair of the spouse ravished the heart of the Bridegroom, thus she loved the smallest practices of religion, and practiced the least and greatest of the virtues. We can truly say, without boasting, that she shone like a sun in the temple of God.

In the uniform life she led one result was evident: she had a high idea of the merit of obedience. She had for her superiors a respect that amounted to veneration. This disposition was so much the more admirable, seeing she was one of the first foundresses, had seen all the other Sisters enter the monastery, and had contributed to their formation in the religious life. But her lively faith allowed her to see only God alone in those who were clothed with authority. At the first election of Mother M. of the Trinity le Rebours, who was only thirty-four years old, she simply gave her an insight into her impressions: "I was making some reflections this morning, my dear Mother, during my meditation, on the guidance of God in regard to the persons whom He has chosen to partake with Him the government of His creatures, and I said to myself: 'Behold now, my God, the person through whom You shall henceforth speak to us; behold our Moses, our Josue, her, in fine, to whom You shall communicate Your spirit, and announce to us all Your oracles.'" This communication of the

Spirit of God to legitimate superiors often formed the subject matter of her meditations. Her conduct was a faithful copy of the examples of obedience and simplicity that we read of in the lives of the Fathers of the desert.

She showed great patience in the infirmities of old age. Nothing was capable of making her relent in her fervor, or of diminishing her spirit of regularity. Full of love for our Eucharistic God, Whom she had received daily for many years, she dragged herself to the choir with a superhuman energy, in order to be abe to receive the Strength of her soul. Her charity and affability while sojourning in the infirmary were the constant theme of admiring Sisters when speaking of her gentle virtues. Her virtue was neither austere nor sorrowful, showed no signs of trouble if forgotten, but simply took whatever was presented her for the relief of her suffering body .

Some months before her death she wished to make the exercises of the annual retreat. But what could she add to her ordinary state of union with God? For a long time He was the only object of her thoughts and her conversations. Several times a day she would open some spiritual book, read some pages or make the acts for the Preparation for Death. By a Heroic Act she despoiled herself of all the indulgenced prayers, to give them to the souls in Purgatory, as well as all her merits, and all that she was suffering and would suffer; she had even made as an offering for their repose all the prayers that would be said for her after her death. After she made that complete oblation God seemed to conserve the life of this holy Religious to prolong her sufferings; her pains were so severe that it would be impossible to comprehend their severity; however, nothing seemed to destroy that interior abandonment to which she had brought herself. Her conformity to the Divine Will was never shaken; her only desire was to suffer and die in making an act of the purest love. This grace was granted her on the day of the octave of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, to which she had great devotion. Two Jesuit Fathers, after her death, bore a startling testimony to her holiness.

On the last day of her life Sister M. of the Annunciation had the consolation of signing a conclusive agreement with the founders of the house, the heirs of the Marchioness of Goullayne. The discussions were long and troublesome; Bishop Fagon indicated the basis of an arrangement, and the Sisters were happy to be able thus to end that delicate affair.

CHAPTER V

SUPERIORITY OF MOTHER M. OF THE ASSUMPTION DUBOIS — DEATH OF MOTHER M. OF THE TRINITY LE REBOURS DE VAUMADEUC — ELECTIONS OF MOTHER M. OF THE INFANT JESUS DE VAUMADEUC, MOTHER M. OF SAINT AVOYE DU BOUETTIER DE KERORGUEN AND MOTHER M. OF SAINT AGATHA BUAT DE LA CROIX—EXPULSION OF THE SISTERS — UNFRUITFUL TRIAL OF RECONSTRUCTION OF THE MONASTERY AFTER THE REVOLUTION

THE election of Mother M. of the Assumption Dubois took place on May 26, 1735. This new superior belonged to an honorable family of Hennebont, where piety was an hereditary virtue. Three of her brothers consecrated themselves to God in the sacerdotal state, as well as in the religious life. The reputation of Mother Heurtant induced the parents to confide to her the education of their three daughters; the two youngest were Sister M. of the Assumption Dubois and Sister M. of Jesus-Dying; both left traces of their virtues in the monastery that time can never obliterate.

From the day of the arrival of young Miss Dubois in the convent Mother Heurtant looked upon her as the making of a perfect Religious, and although she was only a little boarder at the time she had her sing in the choir. The child felt a great attraction for this holy exercise, and she loved the holy Psalmody of the Church. One trait bordering on the heroic has come down to us from the time of her novitiate; it was certainly a great act of mortification. They served her one day in the refectory a portion of decayed fish; the young novice, notwithstanding the well-known delicacy of her stomach, ate her whole portion. The directress, who secretly examined the conduct of young Sisters on that occasion, was exceedingly satisfied with the generosity of Sister M. of the Assumption, to whom she granted three holy Communions for her victory over herself.

When she made her profession, after having exercised some functions in the monastery, she was charged with the direction of the novitiate. Her humility was alarmed at the responsibility of this employment; obedience compelled her to accept it. She was often seen in tears during the three years that she exercised this charge. Fearing for her health, her superiors thought it prudent to remove her, and gave her the charge of econome instead. In this new charge her prayers often obtained needy succor; many times this help was truly Providential.

It was alleged that by her constant solicitude she removed much responsibility from the shoulders of the superiors during their government. If their ideas were opposed to hers, she yielded in the most gracious manner. The confidence her superiors reposed in her caused little jealousies. Seeing her grave demeanor it was imagined that she was proud and haughty on account of her importance; this soon reached the ear of the Mother Superior, and the trouble was soon abated. Sister M. of the Assumption never excused herseslf, and quietly bore the odium of the orders that she could not execute.

A prophecy of Mother Heurtant, badly understood, made them believe that she never would be superior. One day Sister M. of Saint Cecelia le Gouvello, noticing and commenting on the freezing and serious manner of Sister M. of the Assumption, innocently said to this venerable Religious: "Ah, Mother, I would be very much afraid of Sister M. of the Assumption if she ever became superior." "Be quiet," replied the good Mother; "you shall never see it." This Sister did not live to see it, for she died in 1733, two years before the election of her of whom she was so much afraid.

During the absence of Mother le Rebours at the Assembly of 1734, Mother Dubois governed the Community in capacity of Assistant; the Sisters found then that their apprehensions were ill-founded, and thus her election in the following year was very satisfying. Under her direction the Community enjoyed perfect tranquility. The different foundations and the many gifts received at that time are the best proofs that the public continued to have a high esteem for the fervor of the Sisters and the utility of their work.

In 1737 the smallpox ravaged the convent; one Sister died. Her death was followed soon after by that of a poor little negress. The circumstances of her arrival there were quite extraordinary. The savage character of this child and her ignorance of the French language, had been severe trials at first to the Sisters. Kindness won her in the long run; at the time when it was least expected she showed a willingness to be instructed, and to receive Baptism. Up to that moment she was terribly afraid to look at a priest. The day of the burial of Sister M. of Saint Rosalia Limeche she followed, begging eagerly for Baptism. Some days after this poor negress was, herself, attacked with the smallpox, and with such violence that her death appeared inevitable. The desire for holy Baptism increased with the progress of the disease; it was administered to her, and immediately its effects were visible. If perchance those in charge of waiting on her forgot themselves and called her by her old name she would cry out: "I am a Christian, and I am called Mary Ursula." Every day the confessor was obliged to visit her, and, with lively sentiments of contrition, she would accuse herself of the slightest faults that she thought she had committed. Thus she died, with her white robe of innocence unspotted, and was buried in the convent cemetery.

Before her deposition Mother M. of the Assumption commenced a new building. The views of Bishop Fagon differed widely with those of the Community, and the cause was that the building was not as commodious as he wished it to be. Notwithstanding the deference the Sisters showed for his ideas this prelate quarrelled with them, and ceased visiting them altogether. Those constructions were very necessary, for the house was not able to take in any more persons. The Community itself was composed of fifty Religious. Among the lady boarders we find several names belonging to the best families of Brittany. The little boarders numbered between twenty-five and thirty. There were two classes of Penitents; they were occupied with making dimity, cloth, thread, etc. Notwithstanding the numerous donations and the money obtained from the work, poverty was very great. The principal cause was the frequent constructions of all kinds. The first stone of the one we have mentioned above was laid in the name of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, by three poor little children.

At the Ascension of 1741 Mother le Rebours was again placed at the head of the Community. Bishop Fagon died on February 16, 1742. The Vicars Capitular named by the

Chapter immediately raised the interdict against the Jesuit Fathers, and several other holy priests. Then Mother M. of the Trinity hastened to have a retreat for the Community, at which Reverend P. Yven, a renowned missionary, preached the sermons.

In 1745 the monastery obtained from the Chapter an authorization to build a large oven. The Sisters had been asking this permission for a long time, but had never obtained it. As we have already seen, the monastery was built on a fief dependent on the Chapter and belonging to it; it was making use of the oven and the mill of the township. These rights appear strange in our times; at that time they belonged to the location or to the farm, and were less onerous to their owners; these, with reserved rights, were virtual proprietors.

Right Reverend M. de Jumilhac, Bishop of Vannes from 1742 to 1746, had had scarcely any relations with the monastery.

Bishop de Bertin presided at the reelection in 1750 of Mother Dubois. She had taken up the charge in 1747. This Mother was then very ill, but she had the sorrow to see die, instead of herself, her dearly loved Sister, M. of Jesus-Dying Dubois, a very remarkable Religious, and one that had rendered great service to the Community. In order not to increase the illness of the Mother Superior it was necessary to hide from her the death of her sister. The fervent prayers of the Sisters obtained the prolongation of her life, and she was able to celebrate with all due solemnity the centennial of the foundation of the Order in 1751, by Bishop Mole. The concourse of people was very considerable during the three days given up to the festive occasion. All homage and thanksgiving were rendered to the Sacred Hearts.

On December 22d of the following year Mother M. of the Trinity le Rebours du Vaumadeuc died a holy death, at the age of eighty-seven years, and after having spent sixty-seven years in the religious life. No Religious had contributed so much towards the development of the House of Vannes as this good Mother. The confidence the Sisters had in her was evidenced by the frequency with which the Sisters placed her at their head, for they did so every time the Rules allowed. She appears in this too short biography as one of the most remarkable superiors of the Institute.

Less than a year after, Mother M. of the Assumption Dubois died, during the octave of the feast of the Divine Heart of Jesus, October 27, 1753. A Sister has left us the following memoir of her:

> How I love to recall the examples of virtue that she gave us, and in particular the lively faith that animated her during the three principal exercises of piety that are prescribed us: Communion, Office and meditation. Her love for our Lord never allowed her to lose a Communion, notwithstanding her numerous occupations. When did she not animate us by her zeal to seek and find in this Banquet strength and consolation! How many times did she not fear that the young Religious would imbibe that subtle poison of scrupulosity which, without any real reason, would draw them away from that Source of Life, and leave their souls languid and ill at ease! During meditation her ordinary disposition was one of pure faith and profound humility. She looked upon herself as a beast of burden, incapable of thinking a good thought, but enriched with the Blood of Jesus Christ. Oh, how ardent was she for the Holy Office, and how fervently she animated herself and us for the celebration of the feasts of the Divine Hearts of Jesus and Mary!
>
> It was by this solid piety that she fostered in herself all the other virtues. Her hope in God was so firm that she never allowed herself to be swayed by a moment's discouragement; her love for God was so perfect that, without making her taste any consolation, it sustained her in the privation of the most permissible satisfactions. She always preferred the least of her duties to all the joys that could be given her. This dear Mother urged us incessantly to do all our actions in the sight of God, and in working under His Eye He would certainly send us every help we needed, and that we should attach ourselves to God and fly from the vain plaudits of creatures; to act with the motive of pleasing men, and not God, would be infinitely displeasing to Him.

It was consumption that caused her death; hence, she saw herself gradually losing hold on this earth, and she calmly prepared for the end. She placed all her affairs in the most perfect order, and did this with a superhuman energy, for her weakness was very apparent; she kept her secretary near her bed, to whom she gave all the necessary instructions; the Chapters were held in her chamber, and as long as her strength permitted she conversed with the Community. One of the last visits she made to the choir was for the election of Mother M. of the Infant Jesus de Vaumadeuc, who succeeded her.

We have not found the abridgement of the life of this new superior. She was the niece of Mothers le Rebours de Vaumadeuc, and had certainly inherited their spirit and their virtue. The Community had for superior at that time an ecclesiastic full of zeal, and without doubt, very authoritative and a thorough reformer. He found in the young Mother a woman of quiet dignity, who knew how to show a calm and measured opposition to his wonderful views, which he had never expected.

The activity of Mother M. of the Infant Jesus was employed in pursuing the means to acquire a piece of land to enlarge the enclosure. The recital of her attempts in this regard filled nearly twenty pages. It was necessary to send a petition to the King and to nearly all the dignitaries of the States of Brittany. It would be useless to bring all these details into this history. The reading would give consolation, no doubt, as it would show the divine ability with which God drew good out of evil. The Revolution destroyed this legislation which, in the eighteenth century, was a great obstacle for good works. This reading teaches us also that the modern propaganda raised against religious Orders is only a return to those usuages, and that the governors of our own days are only vulgar copyists.

Mother M. of Saint Avoye du Bouettier had the consolation of concluding the purchase, so patiently and well prepared by Mother M. of the Infant Jesus. The enclosure of the monastery was then enlarged, and became more pleasing to all. Today we find it a fine hospital. This superior tried to arrange matters so as to be able to install pipes into the kitchen, through which water would be furnished without too much labor; also, to make the same arrangements for the laundry and garden, but it proved to be a tedious and expensive process.

To sanctify this new increase in their property, Mother M. of the Infant Jesus, after her deposition, raised a magnificent Calvary. In a crypt beneath was placed a chapel dedicated to the Holy Family.

A group represented Jesus, Mary and Joseph; the erection of Christ on Calvary was done with much solemnity and the ceremony excited fervor in all hearts.

The suppression of the Company of Jesus, ordered in the Parliament of Brittany, on May 27, 1762, on the famous

Comptes-rendus of Caradeuc de la Chalotais, caused great affliction among the nuns of the Charity of Vannes. The relations between the monastery and those holy Religious had been continual. It was evident that they had contributed in guarding them against Jansenism. Their sound doctrine on Communion was held in honor; the lives of the Sisters whom we have made known to the reader were daily communicants. Soon after this deplorable event the Community saw itself seriously threatened on account of a wise refusal of the Mother Superior to receive among the boarders a person whose conduct should place her among the Penitents. The Intendent of Rennes and his subdelegate of Vannes had something to say, and must interfere in this trifle. The superioress furnished the letters patent, and showed them the ends for which the Order was founded, and set in motion all the friends of the house; but for this there would have been serious danger of its suppression.

Mother M. of the Infant Jesus le Rebours, being reelected in 1768 solicited new indulgences for the Institute. The new Brief granted four Plenary Indulgences: 1. On Sunday, feast of the Good Shepherd. 2. On the feast of Saint Mary Magdelen. 3. On August 2d, feast of the Portiuncula. 4. On the feast of Saint Jane Frances Chantal. The same sentiment of devotion made them ask to be affiliated with the Capuchin Fathers, Dominicans and Lazarists, so as to participate in the merits of each of these Orders.

From now on the Annals become rather incomplete. They give us few facts and without any real connecting links. The examination of those documents makes us realize that fervor in regard to the fourth vow was ever on the increase, and divine blessings were showered down upon the temporal and spiritual concerns of the house. Finally, we find minute details concerning the donations and foundations for the good of the Penitents; also accounts of providential entrances of some of them, and an account of some holy deaths. One of those Penitents promised in her last moments that if God showed her mercy she would often remember the Community and help them in every way. Shortly after her death two young persons that had been ardently desired by the Community demanded their entrance to the novitiate. The circumstances surrounding the admission of these young ladies made the Sisters think that it was owing to the pleadings of this holy soul, who was soliciting before the Throne of God for cooperators in the work for the salvation of souls.

Mothers M. of the Infant Jesus le Rebours du Vaumadeuc and of Saint Avoye du Bouettier de Kerorguen governed alternately until May 30, 1789; then Mother M. of Saint Agatha Buat de la Croix was elected.

It was under the government of this Mother that the dissolution of the Community took place during the first fortnight of October, 1792. All the Sisters had to leave; when they left they wore their white habits, and all retired together into one particular house. Their intention was to practice the Rule as well as circumstances would permit; the happiness of living together sweetened the bitterness of their afflictions. All the Religious of the other Communities of Vannes kept to the same line of conduct, and in the midst of these persecutions they presented the most beautiful spectacle of invincible firmness and courageous attachment to their holy vocation. Very soon a new decree went forth from the Commune of Vannes (October 24th), obliging them to separate. Here is an extract of that diabolical decree:

> The General Council being assembled, a member of the Commune gave the information that since the closing of the religious houses those women have obstinately lived in Community, and were clothed with the monastic garb, that they gathered in great numbers in some particular houses contrary to the dispositions of the rule that had forbidden them to remain in large numbers together, two being the maximum in any house; that they continue submissive to the orders of their superiors, that they receive the orders and bring them to the former Lay-Sisters or domestics of the so-called monasteries; that these superiors arrogate to themselves the authority that belongs only to law, and strive to keep captive to their wishes the so-called Sisters under the yoke of obedience to their ancient Rule; that, under the pretext that they have no other garments, they wear and have their subordinates wear the veil, guimp and the scapular, which are really not necessary as a part of a woman's clothing, but are simply part of the costume of these so-called Religious; that they show themselves self-opinionated and follow that plan of conduct that has necessitated their dispersion; and consequently hold themselves more and more in communication with those so-called superiors. . . .
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> The General Council then enjoins the superiors of the monasteries of the Eternal Father, of Nazareth, of the Ursulines, of the Visitation, of the Little Convent (Our Lady of Charity) and all the Religious of those different monasteries

to return to their respective domiciles within twenty-four hours, and to lay aside there, without delay, the monastic habit and all religious insignia.

The Revolution was imperious in its commands. Without being disquieted at the evident contradiction of the orders with the reality it obliged persons driven from their homes to retire to their respective domiciles. Well understood, it was in the name of liberty that all these outrages were committed.

In the preceding article we also find the attestation couched in these terms:

"I, Peter le Corps, bailiff for the Criminal Tribunal of Morbihan, having signified to Mme. Buat, heretofore superior of the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity, called the Little Convent, told her personally in the orchard, that she had to obey the decree of the Commune within twenty-four hours.

"This 30th day of October, 1792, the first year of the French Republic, at 8.30 a. m.

"(Signed) P. LE CORPS."

It was on that day the Sisters had to divest themselves of the holy habit and separate. Mother M. of Saint Agatha Buat de la Croix died during the Revolutionary period; where or how has not been stated. On account of her death, and the troubles and afflictions of the time, it is to be supposed that was the principal cause why the House of Vannes was not reestablished. The Sisters that composed it have given touching proofs of fidelity to their vocation. We find them reunited with their Sisters of Saint Brieuc, of Caen, of Tours and of Paris aiding in the reconstruction of those convents. Mother M. of Saint Hippolyte de Botmilliau became the first superioress and foundress of Versailles. Sister M. of Saint Joseph Glain aided her in this generous enterprise. Right Reverend M. de Mayneaud de Pancemont, who was named Bishop of Vannes after the Concordat, gave to these two Sisters a regular obedience. About the same time Mother M. of Saint Francis of Assisi Sauve was elected Superioress of the House of Tours.

In 1809 Bishop de Beausset recalled some Sisters to his diocese of Vannes. He wished to reconstitute a monastery, not at Vannes, but in the ancient Monastery of the Chartreuse near Auray, a place sanctified by the death and burial of so many noble and illustrious victims of that revolutionary time—that is, after the disaster of Quiberon. On September 2, 1809, Mother M. of Saint Francis of Assisi was elected superioress of the new house. The negotiations relative to this installation took place during the vacancy of the episcopal See by the Vicars Capitulars. These gentlemen knew quite well the wonderful services the Religious of the Little Convent rendered formerly, and were anxious to see them once more actively engaged according to their profession, it being impossible to reinstate them in their former house, as the State and town were utilizing it for hospital service. They wanted to keep at least that Order in their diocese.

Unfortunately, the Sisters placed too much reliance on the oral promises made by a benefactor of the work. Not caring to seek his identity, we will simply relate here what Mother Sauve wrote concerning him:

> During the vacancy of the episcopal See of Vannes the generous Vicars proposed to us, on the part of a benefactor who never made himself known to us, that we should establish ourselves at the Chartreuse, near Auray. We replied that the place was too deserted, and not a good location for a house of our Institute. But the anxious entreaties of these gentlemen, the liberality of the founder and the promises given us for the future made us think that it was really God's Will. Having nothing more at heart than to reenter our holy state we accepted the offer with joy and gratitude; but through delicacy for the Vicars-General, who only acted in this circumstance through power of attorney, we simply demanded the contract to assure ourselves of the donation and goods of the Chartreuse. So, when we solicited our authorization, the founder not wishing to give us the house, the minister absolutely refused it.

This absolute confidence brought on grave inconveniences, and this house, established with so much pomp and abundant resources, tumbled down with the greatest rapidity. Mother Sauve continues:

> Some months after our installation in the Chartreuse the founder proposed to us to admit deaf-mutes in a wing of the building, and charge ourselves with giving them schooling. We consented on condition that we would not be charged anything. We thought that the education demanded for these young people could be supplied in some school, feeling that we could not establish one in such a deserted place. We were told that if we would give some novices to instruct the deaf-

mutes six hundred francs would be settled on us. It was a very small compensation for the duties that would be required of four persons. Notwithstanding our repugnance and the want of subjects we consented, in order to conform ourselves to the desire of the Bishop. But the novice to whom we had given the duty was so dissatisfied that we were obliged to stop the work.

Some time after Bishop de Beausset asked us to take it up again, adding that such a work was by far preferable to that of caring for Penitents, and that he would dispense from the regular observances those so employed.

Our views were very different. We did not believe that it was right and proper to renounce a vow that constituted the essence of our Institute, to charge ourselves with an undertaking that was impossible to sustain with eight religious of the choir, sexagenarians and septuagenarians, three of whom were absolute invalids. Hence, we were called upon to fight a long and painful battle, on which charity obliged us to make a hasty conclusion.

Our enclosure was narrowed down to such a point that it was impossible for us to keep it. An extensive wood, two meadows and some other fields were taken away. Astonished at such conduct, we demanded to know why we were despoiled of the property of which we had been so many times assured belonged to us. The reply was that a regular donation, according to the convention, can not be made except at the end of two years for any foundation; consequently, nothing belonged to us.

We were in ignorance of that condition. Our simplicity made us imagine that our brilliant installation placed us in possession of all the goods acquired by the founder. He having refused to make himself known to us, we had conducted the whole business with the Vicars Capitulars whom death soon snatched away from us. They could not sustain the promises they had made us. Hence, we have to learn a valuable lesson, that not oral promises but a contract in writing is indispensable in any transaction.

The Sisters found living a very hard problem until death claimed one whose demise brought a bequest of three thousand francs. Following this death they were exposed to grave difficulties through Bishop Beausset. This prelate, prejudiced and through evil reports, showed that he was dissatisfied with them. However, he demanded the authorization of the government; but the founder not being willing to part with his property, the Minister of Worship refused. The Sisters then had to disperse to the different houses of the Institute that had been reconstructed. Four went to help on the foundation of Saint Brieuc. They arrived there on October 25, 1811.

The Sisters had every right not to change the end of their Institute. They were hopeful that sooner or later a work that modern times, and especially on account of the military that invaded Vannes, would find necessary and useful could be taken up with more success.

The victims of immorality multiplied daily, and they are the first usually who complain of their thraldom, on account of the liveliness of their faith. Their first education and upbringing being Christian, their conversion would be easier and would offer better chances for perseverance.

SIXTH MONASTERY—TOURS

1714

CHAPTER I

NEGOTIATIONS RELATIVE TO THIS FOUNDATION—MOTHER M. OF SAINT CATHERINE MOISAN AND THE SISTERS OF THE FOUNDATION

FROM the foundation of the Monastery of Vannes in 1683 till 1714 the seed of the religious life was abundant in all the Monasteries of Our Lady of Charity; the novitiates were well filled with choice subjects. No doubt, had the times been more favorable, the Order would have spread rapidly. But we are entering on the eighteenth century. Jansenism is rife with fatal power, and began preparing the ruin of the monastic life, which was consummated soon after by the great Revolution. These considerations are sufficient to explain the species of sterility of that Institute, so well and so auspiciously founded by the Blessed Eudes. We might add that the speedy destruction of Hennebont and of several other monasteries of the different Orders made them look upon a new foundation as a thing not to be considered; indeed, well nigh impossible.

The truth of this assertion is found in the long negotiations that were necessary before they could bring themselves to consider even the establishment of the new Monastery of Tours. The conversations concerning it lasted nine years, and were only terminated through the persevering tenacity of all those who knew and appreciated the work. In a pamphlet suggested by the Sisters, M. the Abbe Rolland, chaplain to the Christian Brothers, speaks wisely and well. He will pardon us for borrowing it from him. We wish to render him the homage due to a historian by making use of his labor:

In the year 1705 Father Lhonore, of the Society of Jesus, had the idea of establishing in Tours a Community of the Religious of Our Lady of Charity. One of his brethren, Father le Goff de Murado, nephew of the foundress of the Convent of Guingamp, had determined, on account of the information he had of that house, to address himself to Mother Moisan who was then superioress. The good Father explained in his letter the motives that had inspired him to do so:

"On the report," he wrote, "that was made to me by Father le Goff concerning the zeal and talent that your holy Community have for the conversion of fallen women I have formed the design of procuring you an establishment in this city of Tours; the need is extreme; the city is large; it is a city of pleasure. Everything conduces to crime: the misery of the lowly, the abundance of the great, the mildness and beauty of the climate, etc. Besides, the parish priests and several pious persons have been looking forward for some years for means to make this establishment. His Grace the Archbishop has put himself at the head of this good work with the greatest ardor."

The Father did not dissimulate the difficulties that he would encounter on the way; so he recommended great discretion concerning the matter.

"There was," he continued, "much opposition, which arose from three sides: 1. From certain persons whose condition permitted them to plunge into pleasure, and feared to lose their prey. 2. The need of proper persons to govern these kind of houses; they were not easily found. 3. From the city which, being already charged with several other Communities, was apprehensive lest this establishment would also become a charge on it."

This letter was received with great joy in Guingamp, where they had been wishing a long time for a new establishment. They replied with all speed to Father Lhonore. But things did not move as smoothly as they expected. It was only in 1705, nine years later, that this foundation could be made. During this time the Sisters of Guingamp were visited in turn with hope and discouragement. A thousand unexpected difficulties presented themselves, and if they appeared on the point of being settled an unexpected event cropped up to interfere with the projects that had been so well planned, and thus destroyed hopes that had been so solidly established.

The Most Reverend M. Isore d'Hervaut, Archbishop of Tours, had eagerly received the first confidences of Father Lhonore. But this prelate wished, before undertaking anything, to have letters patent of the King, and "the King never showed himself an enemy to religious foundations; his chancellor, on the contrary, blustered every day against Religious of both sexes." However, the credit of the Archbishop, his goodwill and intelligent zeal made them hope that the difficulty was not insurmountable. They did not count on the grave matters by which the Archbishop might find himself embarrassed. His transactions with the Chapter of Saint Martin claimed every moment of his spare time, and obliged him to throw all of his personal influence with the Court. His Grand Vicar, the Abbe Duveau, begged him to bring the affair to an end: his letters continued to come, incessantly calling the prelate to Paris, or to Bourbon-les-Eaux, or calling him away for his health and the urgency of this foundation. The prelate promised, but he always found new objections, and made them unhesitatingly when the request to the King was presented. Father Lhonore, on his part, would not be silenced, but pursued his object with ardor; he solicited means from pious souls, and had obtained for the work quite a considerable sum of money to aid the expense of the foundation. Mme. Gratian Fouquet, widow of the late Lieutenant for the prosecution, and Head of the Police,—being a Penitent of the holy Religious, took the work to heart, and she established most affectionate and very frequent relations with the Sisters of Guingamp. Her letters and those of Father Lhonore gave them courage, for she promised to furnish the capital necessary for the foundation. This promise was kept secret, for Mme. Fouquet, on account of her heirs, doubted if she could be the foundress. If this scruple had not been covered by the veil of silence the work would have had better results. Prudence hindered the Archbishop from taking steps with the Court before presenting the King and the town with the proofs that the Religious had sufficient means for their existence.

The continuous talk concerning the affair dragged into four years; then new benefactors presented themselves; they could now furnish the prelate with the capital that he required before undertaking the work. At last the longed-for day had arrived. At that time the superiors of Father Lhonore, Rector of the College of Tours, called him to Paris. It was a great joy for the Community of Guingamp; the Father looked upon this journey as a stroke of good fortune and as a clear indication of God's Will, which would give him a chance to terminate the affair, and he so informed the good Religious. He had scarcely arrived in Paris when, like the good Jesuit he was, he rapidly made up his mind to dare all in his power; he worked so hard and in all weathers that he was taken ill with pleurisy, which in a short time conducted him to the tomb. We can easily imagine the affliction among the Sisters when they received the news of his death, so sudden and so untimely. It was the ruin of all their hopes and the annihilation of all their projects. However, it was not destined to utter destruction; it merely entered on a new existence. The Archbishop, the parish priest of Saint Symphorian, M. Jussay, Mme. Fouquet and other persons devoted to this work hastened to assure the Sisters that they were not going to abandon the project of Father Lhonore. "We are most anxious to see Tours," they wrote; "we are preparing the novices, and will soon arrive." Unfortunately, the secret got out; the news of the new foundation reached the ears of the "gentlemen of the town," and they strongly opposed it. The unfortunate conditions of the time, the high expense of living, and the disturbance of the peace were reasons grave enough to make them hesitate about concluding matters. During the year 1710, and those following, there were scarcely any letters, save those of politeness, exchanged between Mme. Fouquet and the Monastery of Guingamp. The pious widow mentioned her desires and her benevolent intentions; she regretted that no one was able to persuade the Archbishop to commence the foundation without the letters patent. "But," she said, "he is too busy with his lawsuit to have any time to spend on anything else. The parish priest of Saint Symphorian, of whom we shall see more, is ill; for myself I have nothing to say to him; he does not speak with women. . . . Anyhow, we must pray; what appears impossible to man is easy to God." The thoughtful and charitable foundress could not foresee everything; her health was very shaky; her great age made her sometimes think she would never set eyes on what to her appeared the most to-be-desired thing—the realization of her fondest hopes. She was not deceived. God called her soon after to receive the crown of her well-spent life, as well as of her generous efforts.

Towards the end of 1713 things went more rapidly: the Archbishop of Tours wrote to the Bishop of Treguir to ask for the six Religious destined for the projected foundation of Tours; the existence of the necessary funds for the defraying of the expenses attached to the installation, and for the pension of the Religious and the Penitents had been stated by authentic acts signed before a notary; there seemed to be no more obstacles; they were resolved on what, under the circumstances, was the wisest course to proceed with the installation of the Religious before receiving the letters patent. The Archbishop of Tours had signified his desire to the Bishop of Treguier that it was his wish to have Mother M. of Saint Catherine Moisan superioress of the new house. The prelate eagerly acquiesced to the wishes of his Metropolitan.* He went himself to the Monastery of Guingamp, assembled the Community (Capitulars), and told them of the choice of the Archbishop of Tours, which was Mother Moisan, and told them that he must be satisfied. He added that as far as he could see she was the best for that mission. This news was like a bolt from the blue for the Religious, and notwithstanding the presence of the Bishop they could not restrain their tears and sobs. They even complained to the Bishop that under these circumstances they would not be able to elect Mother Moisan for their superioress, in place of Mother le Goff, whose term of office was soon to expire. The prelate allowed their tears to flow, listened to their protestations, and then sent word to Mother Moisan to attend at once. She was found prostrate in the church of the monastery. When she entered he told her of the Archbishop's choice, and then awaited her reply. The pious Mother, in a profound sentiment of humility, said that she was unworthy of fulfilling so difficult a mission; but as obedience is the inseparable companion of humility, she hastened to add that she was ready to obey. The entire Community admired this abnegation and, after her example, accepted for the glory of God the sacrifice He demanded of them. He named another superior for Guingamp, and on Thursday, May 28th, Mother Moisan was elected superioress for the House of Tours.

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* Tours was then a Metropolitan See for the whole of Brittany. The Archdiocese of Rennes was not erected until January 3, 1859.

Here would be the proper place to introduce Mother M. of Saint Catherine Moisan, whom the reader will remember, doubtless, as the former Superior of Guingamp. Her family was one of the noblest in Normandy, but unfortunately attached to Protestantism.

Her grandmother was a convert and resided in Brittany. God blessed her with a numerous posterity. From the foundation of the Monastery of Guingamp almost till the time of the Revolution we find Sisters of that family in that convent. Mlle. Moisan lost her parents when she was quite young. Her education did not suffer on account of this early loss; for her eldest sister was unusually pious, and took the greatest care of her little sister. This little one showed even from her tenderest years a decided leaning towards the religious state. Faithful to the call of God she requested admission into the monastery founded by her aunts, Madames de Kervegan and des Arcis. She was admitted on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This circumstance alone greatly contributed in inspiring her with a love for this devotion, which she propagated, as we have seen, in the diocese of Treguier. Later her zeal was not less efficacious in Tours.

She was received by Mother M. of Saint Paul Poutrel. The spiritual foresight was so quickened in this good Mother that she soon discovered the rare qualities of mind and heart with which the new novice was endowed, and foresaw the services that the Institute was likely to receive through her instrumentality. The superior taught her novice how to vanquish self, to practice mortification, to overcome pride, and especially how to keep peaceful in the midst of contradictions. This last virtue was indispensable to Sister M. of Saint Catherine. She acquired it to a degree that few souls have attained. We shall see that in the midst of the greatest trials her soul never lost that distinguishing virtue of peaceful repose.

While still a young professed she exercised the most important and most delicate employments of the convent, and some of them were charges that test one's capacity for recollection and the interior life, since she alternately exercised the duties of portress and econome. Frequent relations with people from the town and other externs never caused her spirit of solitude to forsake her. She was very attentive in watching over herself, and in her own quiet, dignified way, she knew how to make herself esteemed and respected. Her excessive disinterestedness caused some of the Sisters to admonish her betimes. It proceeded from a love of equality; every one was treated alike as far as possible, and if a difference had to be made it was instantly known why. Several persons, touched by these benevolent proceedings, were inspired to give alms most generously.

Shortly before her election as Superioress of Guingamp she had an occasion to give proofs of her zeal for the salvation of souls as Mistress of the Penitents, a charge for which she had a wonderful talent. Her amiable simplicity, and her solid sense showed her the good she might be able to accomplish, and her firmness inspired a salutary fear in those whom she directed. In the history of Guingamp we have told about the abundant fruit that those virtues produced in the midst of her Sisters and the Penitents, as well as the sacrifices she imposed on the monastery to brighten the lives of the Penitents.

Bishop de Kerlivio gave Sister M. of Saint Gabriel le Gaffrie as Assistant to Mother Moisan; this Sister was born in the same diocese, at Lannion. Two of her brothers were remarkable for their religious virtues in the Order of the Capuchins; a third was no less distinguished in that of Saint Norbert. Mlle. le Gaffrie, brought up in such a pious household, was not so pious as might have been expected; on the contrary, she had a marked taste for worldly distractions and the passing pleasures of sense. Her personal beauty and a wonderfully cultured mind made it easy for her to distinguish herself as a lady at all gatherings. The house of her brother-in-law, a noted lawyer in that little town, furnished her every occasion to show her wit and beauty. To bring home to this worldly young lady the nothingness of this life and its vanities God made use of some sermons that she heard occasionally. One in particular fired her imagination with thoughts of eternity, and she debated within herself whether or not she ought to give up the world, and listen to the Divine call; she was undecided what to do. In order to combat more easily her frivolous tastes she sought refuge with the Ursuline nuns. She was received into the novitiate, and being on the point of being admitted to her profession difficulties arose between the convent and her family concerning her dowry. An understanding between the two parties seemed not possible, and our fervent novice was obliged to leave the holy asylum where she had hoped to live and die. This incident took place in 1680. The reading of this incident in the Annals shows us that at that time the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary was practiced in the Convent of the Ursulines of Lannion. The Blessed Eudes had a great deal to do with that holy Order in Caen, in Bayeaux, and wherever he preached. He was superior for a number of years in the Ursuline Convent of Lisieux; no doubt these relations were made use of in propagating this devotion among the Religious. At Lannion the good performed through the influence of Mother M. of the Trinity could be seen. The notice we have read regarding Sister M. of Saint Gabriel shows us the esteem the Fathers of the Premonstratensian Order had for her.

The Superioress of the Ursulines of Lannion made a novena to the Immaculate Heart, so Mlle. le Gaffrie gave up the idea of being an Ursuline, and her brother, the Premonstratensian, brought her to Mother Heurtant. After a fervent novitiate, Sister M. of Saint Gabriel could no longer hide her talents which, in the world, had made her so useful to her brother-in-law; her success in all the charges designated her by Bishop de Kerlivio was, no doubt, due to her natural aptitude, as well as to her virtues. This illustrious Bishop wished to send to his Metropolitan only the choicest subjects.

Among the colaborers with those two Mothers we find Sisters M. of Saint John Baptist Croiset and Mary of Jesus Pacificus de l'Esne. The first was born at Saint Malo. Her family were respectable merchants, but through reverses lost all their money. It was not until she was about twenty-five years old that she was able to correspond to the grace that had, for a long time, been tugging at her heartstrings calling her incessantly to the religious life. The reputation that the House of Guingamp enjoyed made her choose it for her place of repose. In the world her situation compelled her to occupy herself in many concerns; in the cloister she had virtue enough to live unknown in the midst of the young Sisters who composed the novitiate. Her services were very useful to the new foundation in the employments of portress, econome and Mistress of the Penitents. She died on April 20, 1744.

Sister M. of Jesus Pacificus lived until 1753. The notice that was consecrated to her memory, after having made known the nobility of her family, spoke of her humility, and the numerous and lengthy services that she rendered to religion in the charges of Assistant, Counsellor and Mistress of the Penitents.

In the monasteries the functions of the Touriere Sisters are more difficult and more important. There are no secrets from them; they see and hear everything, and the superiors see and hear only through them the business transactions of the outside world. The choice of a Touriere, then, contributes much to the success of a foundation. The choice that Bishop de Kerlivio made was an excellent one. In the history of the Monastery of Tours, Sister M. Teresa Hamon played a remarkable role. Her rare ability assured the success of the most delicate transactions. She was never at a loss for resources; her courage was ahead of every contradiction, and her perseverance bore away the palm of victory in every encounter. The Monastery of Tours was not the only one that owed her a debt of gratitude; we shall see how devotedly she labored in the House of Paris. The Archbishop of Tours had promised to admit her, after some years, to the solemn profession of the Choir-Sisters. But the Bishop of Treguier pretended that he had a right to her, and made her the same propositions. Death stepped in and ended the debate. God wished, Himself, to recompense this dear Sister, and called her to Himself on August 20, 1721.

Such were the Sisters destined for the foundation of Tours. When the news of the nomination of Mother M. of Saint Catherine was made known in the township and city of

Treguier it produced quite a movement among the people, and of irritation against Bishop de Gerlivio. Public opinion accused the Bishop of unfairness. Mother Moisan, to calm every one, declared that her departure was perfectly free, and that she undertook the work with joy.

We now take up the recital of Father Rolland as furnished us by the Annals:

> These first Sisters left on June 28th; the Bishop of Treguier remained at Guingamp until that day. Out of interest for this monastery he wished to assure the Community that it would not need to give any wearables to the departing Sisters except the habits and linen that was strictly necessary. But simply friendship and charity had given us the idea to do more than that. We had prepared packages and bundles and their own little movables, so that their farewell was, if painful to us, at least satisfactory, knowing we had given them what was most needful. All these things were sent on by a messenger; if the route had not been so long we could and would have sent on more; we supplemented these with money, giving them one hundred coins for their journey.
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> All the arrangements were made, and on the feast of Saint John the Baptist, patron of Mother Moisan, they offered her as a last token of regard a spiritual bouquet; they even served supper in the garden, to give her a royal parting; but the company invited to this repast was too sad to enjoy the situation. After this *Agape* they lighted the fire of joy in the chapel of the Holy Angels; we walked there as to a funeral, sobs and tears our only music. The dear god-child of this good Mother composed a farewell tribute, which she sang for her: the air, the words and the accent she gave it, joined to the tears she shed, drew forth a torrent of tears, so that she was unable to finish her emotional song.
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> On June 25th a violent storm burst forth at the moment of their departure, and the Religious made use of its violence to keep their three Sisters still longer in their midst; but Mother Moisan would not consent, and they left their convent home for other scenes and harder work, carrying with them the regrets of all. Several of those remaining ran up to the belfry and the attics to catch a last glimpse of their departing Sisters; they kept them company for about two leagues, watching the carriage that took away the dear ones.
>
> The journey was quite happy and eventful. At Loomine they descended at the Pardon of Saint Columban, "where they fervently invoked mercies and blessings on the feeble-minded and the crazy." They were so overpowered in their carriage that they concluded they would give some credit to the saint for helping themselves; this proposal diverted them wonder-

fully, as they concluded they needed his services, as well as, and perhaps more than, those poor creatures for whom they were inclined to intercede. They were royally received in the Communities of Vannes and Rennes; they were feasted and pampered and provided with all sorts of good things.

During the time they spent resting the dear travelers visited Magistrate M. le Paige. He had several daughters. One of them, touched with the modesty of the Sisters, took the resolution to join them later. This resolution was not ephemeral, for she became the first professed of the monastery, under the name of Sister M. of Saint Catherine.

CHAPTER II

ARRIVAL OF THE SISTERS IN TOURS—THEIR INSTALLATION—THE CONFRATERNITY OF THE SACRED HEARTS—CONVERSION OF SEVERAL PENITENTS — FIRST TRIALS — DEATH OF MADAME FOUQUET, THE FOUNDRESS

CONTINUING the narrative of Father Rolland:

The Sisters arrived in Tours on July 9th, and went to the residence of the parish priest of Saint Symphorian. The Archbishop, having been notified of their arrival, went to the rectory, and showed his unbounded joy in thus seeing his wishes realized. The prelate then wished to accompany them to the chapel of Saint John, to examine the locality, and see if they could establish their monastery there. The next day Mme. Fouquet brought them in her carriage to the Archbishop's palace, where he received them with every token of benevolence. He told them he thought it would be a good idea to make some visits to several persons of distinction, to whom he would introduce them, that an acquaintance with those people would be very essential to the future well-being of the monastery. He also gave them a list of all the Communities in the town, saying it would be well to go and salute them, so there would be a cordial feeling between them. Mother Moisan expressed to his Grace that she had a great reluctance to make such visits. With much tact and politeness she made him understand that, out of respect for the Rule, they had abstained during their journey from making visits to celebrated shrines, and that it seemed less necessary to make those he had just proposed. The prelate quietly agreed to those reasonings, and showed himself highly pleased with her adherence to her Rules, but Mme. Fouquet was decidedly disappointed that she did not have the privilege of introducing them to her friends. She showed her displeasure to Mother Moisan, who was much afflicted because of the view the good lady took in this circumstance.

Our Religious then went to live in the Convent of the Christian Union,* where they lived until the day they took possession of their monastery. Mme. de Fouquet had given orders that no labor was to be spared, and everything was to be done that could give them comfort, and her orders were obeyed.

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* The Daughters of the Christian Union formed a teaching Congregation, founded under the episcopacy of Bishop Amelot, by the Canon Sain, towards the end of the twelfth century. Their convent was situated on the Rue Chaude, today the Rue de la Prefecture, in a place where there is now a Protestant church. This Community was closed, as were others in Tours, in October, 1792. It was never reestablished.

Mother Moisan was a woman of rare merit and high virtue, and she greatly edified all those in the convent who sheltered her during her days of waiting. The Archbishop of Tours appreciated at its true worth the treasure that had been sent him. He wrote his appreciation to the Bishop of Treguier, and heartily thanked him.

When Mother Moisan arrived in Tours the benefactors said nothing of the project they had in view concerning the establishment of a monastery. She respected this silence, abandoned herself into the hands of Divine Providence, accepted with gratitude whatever He sent her and avoided talking or complaining of what she did not have. She possessed nothing; but far from troubling herself about the needs of the future or soliciting benefits she worked with that dignified calmness so natural to her, for she felt sure that God, Who had brought her there, would see to her needs. Pious souls who had expected the coming of the nuns looked smilingly upon her easy way of setting aside all future speculations on the how and wherefore; they could not longer contain their secret, and told her: "We are going to help you; we shall make great efforts to put your little Community on the proper footing; but we shall work in the hope that you are going to people Heaven with souls. Up to this we have only testified our goodwill to you; today we can say that we are delighted with your disinterestedness; we know that you seek only the glory of God; so we want to give you the means to procure it. We will aid you to gain heaven, in the hope that this will be accomplished; we shall part with our riches that they may sustain and maintain your convent."

They put their heads together to make choice of a good location whereon they could build the monastery; many difficulties arose in this regard. The Religious and the friends who accompanied them from Tours had cast their eyes on a piece of land in Saint Etienne's parish; but M. Jussai was anxious they would purchase the Convent of the Ladies of the Annunciation. This contretemps gave occasion for discussions that were not of a peaceable character. The Sisters did not take part in these acrid debates, satisfied to pray earnestly that Almighty God would straighten out the tangle; they only mentioned, when the case came up before them, that they were willing to abide by the unanimous approval of the gentlemen. Providence seemed to have been in favor of the Convent of the Annunciation in the parish of Our Lady of Rich. The owner of the estate in Saint Etienne was asking an exorbitant sum, so they decided to follow the initiative of the parish priest of Saint Symphorian. Besides, this house seemed to be ready for them: there were several buildings, a chapel, an entrance court, a newly-planted garden, and they learned on their entrance that a Religious of the Order of the Annunciation, who had died in the odor of sanctity, had predicted on quitting this monastery that it would be one day occupied by Religious who would be robed in white, and who would belong to an Order very devoted to the Blessed Virgin. This prophecy was made fifty years before they took possession of it.

Mother Moisan hastened to appropriate the convent, and entered into possession on September 9, 1714. On October 4th four new Sisters arrived from Guingamp, and on the 27th of the same month the Archbishop came to confirm the election of the superioress. It was a gala day; the chapel was filled with a curious crowd, all on tiptoe to see the much-talked-of white nuns. The prelate received the profession of faith from Mother Moisan at the grate of the choir, which was opened for the ceremony. Father Joseph, a Capuchin Friar, preached the sermon. There was such a concourse of people present that he found it impossible to get to the pulpit. Happily, there was a large window opening from the chapel on to the pulpit, so the preacher had to mount it from this point of vantage. He preached with burning eloquence on the excellence and utility of the new foundation. He took special care to emphasize the importance of the fourth vow, by which the Religious engaged themselves to labor for the conquest of souls and the care of Penitent women. He praised the zeal of the Archbishop, in thus procuring for his diocese a means so powerful in its ramifications to bring souls back to God, and through the intervention of those Religious to help those erring souls to regain the innocence forfeited by a life of sin. They then entoned the *Laudate Dominum*, the *Alleluia* of joy; then the prelate blessed the monastery, and at the head of the clergy conducted the Religious to the cloister. The ceremony terminated with Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

We have seen in the history of Guingamp the zeal with which Mother Moisan propagated the devotion to the Sacred Hearts; from the very beginning she wanted to erect in the convent the Confraternity established in honor of the Sacred Hearts. The Archbishop of Tours, who had already refused this favor to the Fathers of the Society of Jesus and the Religious of the Visitation, thought it his duty to grant it to the Religious of Our Lady of Charity, because he considered this devotion as proper to their Order.* The day of the octave of their installation a large assemblage of people came again to their chapel: three hundred and fifty persons were inscribed on the registers of the Confraternity, and Mother Moisan was at the height of her ambition.

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* This detail established the reputation of the Blessed Eudes; evidently this prelate was thoroughly acquainted with his efforts in spreading this devotion, and its priority to that of the Blessed Visitandine.

The zeal of the Sisters did honor to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and was recompensed by the abundant blessings bestowed upon their labors among the Penitents. Immediately after the establishment had been regularly attended to those wandering sheep of the fold were received. Mother M. of Saint Catherine absolutely wished that the doors would be opened to all seeking admission. As different errors and erroneous ideas at that time infected the city of Tours the Sisters found themselves obliged to combat them as they did the vice of impurity. One of the first Penitents received was inoculated with those erroneous principles, and most obstinate in holding to them, so that she publicly boasted of killing the Religious if they would keep her, as she said, in this *devil of a convent!* However, this is what happened to her and six others nearly as wicked as herself. Grace triumphed in a very short time over the evil dispositions of those wretched creatures, and they became as docile as lambs. She of whom we have spoken was touched with so great a desire of repentance and reparation that for one year her tears never ceased to flow. God proved her spirit of reparation by a long and severe illness. As soon as her health was restored her resolution of returning to the world was taken, where she lived a good Christian life.

Another Penitent was inconsolable when she entered, but after a short stay gave proofs of a sincere conversion. Her beauty was her curse; but now she ceased to take any satisfaction in her looks and paid no attention to the preservation of that beauty. Divine Providence seemed to lend her assistance in this particular, for she was attacked with a frightful illness that completely disfigured her. She testified no sorrow over the wreck of her beauty, nor did she seek any cure or remedy. When she had recovered, her resolution to belong entirely to God was so unshakable that the Rector of the Jesuits and some persons of piety made her enter the house of the *Canonesses*, where she made her religious profession.

Good Father Rolland continues:

> The demon could not allow this work to go along smoothly; it beat him at his own game; attacked his empire over poor humanity; so he stirred up malevolent spirits

against the Sisters, and ignorantly spread calumnies about them. People of distinction, as well as many ecclesiastics, listened to this broadcast vilification of good holy women. Things went so far that they sent away the domestics, of whom they had so much need: they had the Sisters confounded with the Penitents in their accusations; they even said that the Penitents were ill-treating the Sisters, and even struck them. One young novice, Mlle. Suppligeau, formed by Father Lhonore, was discouraged by these reports, and wanted to leave the monastery; Mother Moisan had some difficulty in trying to keep her, representing to her that all these calumnies came from the devil and his malice. Many other young ladies allowed themselves to be influenced, and gave up the idea of entering the new Community.

What added also to these difficulties was the abortiveness in getting the letters patent. The Cardinal de Noailles, Archbishop of Paris, made his petition to Bishop d'Hervaut, who was charged with this business; but the Royal Counsel did not wish, during the minority of the King, to occupy him with the care of religious houses, and refused the approbation to the letters that the prelate had obtained from the Counsel of Conscience. The Archbishop of Tours was deeply afflicted by this refusal, and kept it secret. He did not even tell his secretary. The parish priest of Saint Symphorian, whom he met in Paris, was the sole recipient of his troubles. He charged him to bring the news to the Sisters, and to warn them to keep it a profound secret. Thanks to this general discretion they were led to believe in Tours and Paris that the house was regularly authorized by the King.

Bishop d'Hervaut was a great sufferer at that time, and soon after went to receive the recompense of his labors. This was a new subject of affliction for the Sisters. But they had not yet arrived at the summit of their Calvary.

The parish priest of Our Lady of Rich, who had formerly shown his delight in knowing they were in his parish, where they would do so much good, now became very exacting; he sent them his assistant priest, charging him to present them with some eighteen articles, comprising conditions entirely opposed to their Rules and the usages of their Order. He wanted the key of the Tabernacle; he wanted to keep the right of administering the Sacraments in their chapel and of singing the Office, with all his clergy, on the four principal feasts of the year. Besides, he obliged the Religious to pay him ten livres on those principal feasts, and two coins to indemnify him for the use of the houses in the enclosure; he did not forget to add that they would have to pay more if they would enlarge their household. The Sisters were not to be intimidated; they replied to the assistant priest: "Reverend Father, will you be so good as to inform M. le Cure that we would be pleased to see him here, so we can have a thorough explanation, but kindly inform him, also, that as far as we can conscientiously fulfill his wishes we shall be happy to meet them, but our Rules are the Will of God for us." They did not expect he would come to see them, but luckily the other priest gave him no rest until he made the visit.

When he ordered his steward to clear the tax of 1,400 francs imposed on the house where the Sisters were living they found the news terrifying. They now feared they would not get the letters patent either. But the Touriere charged with settling this business acquitted herself of this affair with such ability and ordinary good nature, that far from allowing the secret to transpire, she made her responses in such a way as to make them believe that the monastery was perfectly safe with the State. She obtained, besides, an entire remission of the tax, so that the Sisters had not to pay it.

Notwithstanding the efforts of the demon to stop the progress of his work it prospered far beyond their most cherished expectations; the Penitents arrived; they soon numbered thirty. It was a heavy charge on the Community, whose revenues were not large; but the zeal of Mother Moisan was admirable; full of confidence in Providence, she received all those that presented themselves, without stopping to think where provisions would come from. On seeing their superior so whole-hearted in those matters they sometimes said to her laughingly: "Mother, if the devil dressed up like a girl, and asked to come in to be converted, you would open the doors to him." Their trials seemed about to end, and all those who were acquainted with their labors loved to give them marks of their sympathy.

The two successors of Bishop d'Hervaut did not take possession of their See; the third, Bishop de Camilly, during the few months of his episcopacy, testified great interest in the Community. In this he only followed the tradition of his family, whose usefulness to the Order of Our Lady of Charity we have read of in the history of the Caen foundation. The Annals say that the docility of the Sisters in all the decisions of the Church contributed very much in gaining them the esteem of this prelate. The details that we read of concerning the revolt of certain Religious will readily show us the spirit of the Jansenistic sect, and will excite in us the reason we have to bless God for having preserved from this error, so pernicious in its many ramifications, the Monasteries of Our Lady of Charity. . . .

The stewards of the province also testified their great esteem, and they spoke highly of the good being done. However, one of them allowed himself to be influenced by evil tidings. He came to the convent one day without sending word, hoping to surprise the Sisters, and find out for himself if the stories were correct. Mother Moisan was, of course, surprised by such an unexpected visit, but found no fault whatever with it. The steward without any parleying (he was accompanied by a judge) told them to open the doors, and went immediately to the apartment of the Penitents. He interviewed them all, and all replied that they were quite happy and very grateful for the care bestowed upon them. The visitors were surprised. To the praise of the steward it must be said that he was delighted, and spoke in the highest terms of all he had seen.

The holy Religious of Our Lady were more concerned and more grateful to see their Penitents so repentant than in receiving such eulogies, and they blessed God for thus recompensing their labors. The privation of the letters patent kept the Community in a precarious condition. The number of Penitents increased; it was necessary to build, and Mme. Fouquet, the benefactress, thought it would not be prudent to take any steps in that direction before the surety of the letters. They resolved to take new steps to effect this in the year 1728. Most Reverend de Rastignac, Archbishop of Tours, said he would undertake the business, and as he was very well known to the King, and as his Majesty always lent a willing ear to his petitions, he thought it was a good opportunity and he would take advantage of it. The prelate wrote to the Monarch, and his petition was granted. His Majesty informed the Minister of Favors that out of respect for the Archbishop of Tours he desired that the house of the Religious of the Charity of Tours would be firmly established. The Archbishop was delighted, and went, himself, to announce the good news to the Sisters, and urged them to send some one to Paris to hasten the affair. A Touriere Sister was then dispatched with a letter from the prelate to the Count of Saint Florentine, Prime Minister. This Sister was very intelligent, modest and tactful; she knew just how to gain the good graces of the Minister and several other influential persons. She saw her mission crowned with success, when the inevitable parish priest of Rich stopped her proceedings. The opposition of the priest was something to be reckoned with; the good Sisters could not conclude the affair, and she had to return to Tours to strive to overcome his opposition.

The Sister informed the Archbishop of the difficulties she had met with, and asked him to advise her what to do. They then addressed themselves to the gentlemen of the city to obtain a favorable hearing and advice. The Mayor commenced a proceeding of *de commodo et incommodo*, the result of which was very encouraging and very flattering to the Sisters. As to the opposition of the parish priest of Rich, Archbishop de Rastignac charged himself with overcoming his opposition. He invited him, with the priests of Saint Peter du Boile, of Saint Clement and of Saint Peter des Corps, to go on a fixed day to the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity, and he, himself, went there to preside at the gathering. With a courtesy that was exceedingly gracious he prayed the parish priest of Rich to state his wants; then he examined them one after another, discussing them on every point. The Religious granted willingly all that was not contrary to their Rules, the priest then lessened his pretentions, and only asked from the Sisters the sum of twelve livres per year: the Archbishop and the clergy settled this rent as being sufficient. A document was prepared and signed by the session, and they then separated.

The Touriere Sister, taking the different documents with her, went to Paris, and soon after returned, carrying with her the long-desired and hard-earned papers or letters. We now see that this house was not founded on any other platform than that of the cross, and it was by this same cross that it was sustained for all time. From the time it was first projected until that period, "our Divine Savior," the Annals tell us, "rendered us participants with Him in the bitterness of His chalice, making us pass through tribulations, showing us by this favor that it was His house, that He had made choice of it to give life and grace to many souls who were walking the broad road to perdition."

Those who were particularly interested in this foundation were not to see it prosper and increase. The parish priest of Saint Symphorian died shortly after the obtaining of the letters patent, and Mme. Fouquet, who saw the beginning of the construction of the large building of which she paid the expense, went also to receive the recompense of her virtues and pious widowhood, before seeing it finished. We owe a debt of gratitude to this pious lady, for she was truly the foundress and mother of the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity; she attached such a price to its existence that she often deprived herself of necessaries to bring help to the good Religious. She was rich, but she could not deprive her heirs of the fortune she must leave to them. She wore the very simplest garments; indeed, one might say they looked shabby enough to be poverty-stricken; she ate vegetables that she seasoned "very meagerly," and was truly "the saint of that age."

The Sisters themselves lived meagerly, and knew well how to practice their beloved poverty. Here is a fact which, in its simplicity, will give some faint idea of that life of privation to which we often see a religious Community exposed—privations the world knows nothing of, and which reveal mysteries of faith and love. The feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus fell one year on a Friday. The Sister Dispenser had only some beet-roots for the midday meal to celebrate one of the grandest feasts of the Order. She was touched to see the Sisters fatigued after their long Office, which they had sung; she went tremblingly to the superioress, and asked her permission to make a little change in the repast for the Sisters, and to give them, together with the beets, one egg each. Mother Moisan consented, on account of the solemnity of the day; but

Mme. Fouquet unexpectedly asked permission to dine with the Religious. "Then the grandeur of the repast frightened our Mother; we did not dare to serve it without knowing if our foundress might find it agreeable, and did not wish to do anything contrary to her intentions. Mother said a change was made on account of the fatigue of our Sisters, and the poor little egg was given merely for their relief." We dare to say that Mme. Fouquet had the cruelty not to consent to see the much-longed-for egg on the table. "We will content ourselves with the beets, my good Mother," she replied; "that will be quite sufficient, I think." They hid the eggs, which served for another repast, and the good Sisters ate the beets, happy to have an occasion of practicing holy poverty.

The death of this holy and generous lady happened on September 21, 1734, and threw the Religious into great embarrassment. It was, in effect, by her orders, and confident in her promises, that Mother Moisan had undertaken the construction of a new building for the Penitents. Stricken with apoplexy, she had no time to make any provision for all the necessary expenses that she had calculated on finishing, and the Community could not get a penny of the sums she bequeathed them, as her will had been contested and declared void. It was a hard trial, and for the time-being they had to give up receiving novices; this made it more necessary for them to place their entire reliance on God. Mother Moisan, since her acceptance of the foundation of Tours, had seen all the benefactors disappear precisely when she had the most need for them. She was very sensible to the loss of those persons whom she esteemed and loved exceedingly, but she was persuaded that her great and only Benefactor could not die; when all human help failed she knew well that God would continue to bestow His graces by some other channel. Her confidence was so great that she forgot her own poverty to help families completely plunged in misery. She received provisions secretly and sent them to the Communities whom she knew were poorer than her own; she offered her house, her care, her heart to those who were unhappily visited by fire or other accidents, and the economes of the house always remarked that provisions were visibly multiplied in their hands when their incomparable Mother bestowed her goods upon the poor. She did not trouble herself about the next day, as the Savior said, and that Word was well understood and practiced by her; it was the inviolable rule of her conduct. God recompensed this absolute confidence: an ecclesiastic on his death-bed willed his whole fortune to the Community, and so the work that had been commenced could at length be finished.

CHAPTER III

SUPERIORITY OF MOTHER M. OF SAINT GABRIEL LE GAFFRIE — CURES ATTRIBUTED TO THE INTERCESSION OF THE BLESSED EUDES — ELECTION OF MOTHER M. OF SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES D'AMISY—EDIFYING DEATH OF MOTHER M. OF SAINT CATHERINE MOISAN

ALL those events rapidly described by the Abbe Rolland did not happen during the first term of Mother M. of Saint Catherine Moisan's superiority. In 1721 her deposition took place conformably to the Rule, and Mother M. of Saint Gabriel le Gaffrie replaced her during six years.

These two venerable Sisters had inspired the new Sisters formed by them with their own confidence in the Blessed Eudes. During those first years of foundation, the Annals relate, three miraculous cures were effected through the intercession of the Blessed founder.

A novice obtained the first favor. She had been suffering much for some months. A day had been arranged when she would return home with her mother, hoping that a change of air would help her; that morning she went to the choir, and was inspired at that moment to make her petition to the Blessed founder, asking his help in her extreme need. Falling on her knees, she said to him in the simplicity of her heart: "If God wishes that I should become your daughter, obtain for me the health I need to accomplish His design, and I promise to say your litany during nine days, and to practice those acts of obedience that you know I have such a repugnance for." This promise was hardly made than her health was restored; she recovered at once her natural color, as well as her normal strength. Great was the surprise of the Sisters when, on her return to the infirmary, they saw her eat all that was set before her, as if she had never been ill. The next day she assisted at all the exercises of the Community without feeling any fatigue. It was only in the evening that she acknowledged to her mistress the prayers she had said and the promise she had made to the Blessed founder.

The parents of the young novice were more surprised than the Sisters, and out of gratitude made a magnificent frame for the picture before which their daughter had obtained so great a grace.

The doctor, who had been treating this novice for so long a time for a continuous state of languor and want of vitality, acknowledged that remedies were of no avail, and gave a certificate as follows:

> Although I am not over credulous regarding such things when they are explainable by physical reasonings, I am, however, persuaded that so prompt a cure is extraordinary, especially when it had lasted so long as has the one in question, and I do not doubt that this has not been beyond the ordinary laws of nature, and I believe that the saints operate wonderful cures; this I certify truly.
>
> DURAND, *Royal Physician.*
>
> TOURS, January 22, 1722.

The cure of a young professed is perhaps more manifestly miraculous. This Sister had large glandular swellings on her neck and throat, which caused fear that possibly she had scrofulous humors in her body. The Mother Superior and her Assistant were very much affected at the evident loss of such an excellent subject, and had recourse to their good Father, and made a vow before his picture to have nine Masses said and have a taper burned at his tomb, if the poor invalid would be cured. At once the young Sister found herself cured, without being able to state the manner in which the wonderful cure was wrought in her, for she had no knowledge of the promises and prayers that had been made for her. Her superiors then invited her to unite with them in thanking God and His glorious servant.

The subject of the third cure was a Penitent; it happened in 1723. At Midnight Mass this Penitent fell unconscious to the ground. Her state of absolute unconsciousness lasted so long that Mother M. of Saint Gabriel went to see her, and was deeply concerned at her unfitness to receive the Last Sacraments. Instantly an inspiration came to her to lay on the head of the girl a letter of the Blessed founder. She immediately came to, and was able to receive the Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction. This consciousness lasted only a few minutes. After the ceremonies were over she relapsed into a state of coma; the doctor and confessor felt sure she could not go through the night. They made the recommendation of the soul, and her companions came to pray around her bed. All at once she raised her hands above her head, as if in search of something which she could not get. The Mother Superior then took out the letter, which she had placed in her purse, and gave it to her. The dying girl seized it lovingly and kissed it with deepest reverence. Much impressed at what she saw, Mother M. of Saint Gabriel told her that the writing that she held in her hand was that of the Blessed servant of God, to whom they had made many promises and said many prayers for her cure, if it would be beneficial for her salvation, or the grace of a happy death if it would be more advantageous for her. The patient testified then that she understood, and by a squeeze of the hand made her feel she had united her intention with theirs. Hardly had those around her finished reciting three *Paters* and three *Ave Marias* and three *Gloria Patris,* than she opened her eyes; speech returned and she told them she was perfectly well. She arose, dressed herself alone and took some nourishment. The chaplain, doctor and surgeon who had retired were again called, and sang the *Te Deum* with the Community; this took place in the tribune of the infirmary. They carried there the picture of the Blessed, and the Penitent, standing before the picture holding a lighted candle, joined in the singing of the canticle in a strong firm voice. From that day on she assisted at all the exercises of the Rule; her soul also underwent a change, and a consoling one it was. Her resolution was taken to live and die in the house, and this favor was granted her, notwithstanding the poverty of the house. It had been almost ruined by the disastrous ministry of the Law of Intrigue; so they were obliged to refuse several postulants who had presented themselves.

In 1733 there was elected for the first time a new superioress, Mother M. of Saint Francis de Sales d'Anisy. She proved to have been one of the most remarkable superiors of that house. It was under her government that the General Assembly was held in 1734. The Monastery of Tours was not represented. The "Life of Mother Moisan" mentions her lively desire of answering the call, and the formal prohibition of Archbishop de Rastignac. One of the principal reasons for this prohibition was the fear that the fatigues incident to long journeys would end in destroying the health of this good Mother, which was at the time in a weakened condition.

To be perfectly truthful about the matter, as becomes a truthful historian, we ought to state that Mother M. of Saint Catherine Moisan was, with Mother M. of Saint Isidore Helloiun du Bocage, one of the most ardent defenders of the former Constitutions. The uprightness of her intentions could not be doubted; nothing proves better, however, how even the holiest souls can be guilty of error. After the approbation of the Constitutions by the Holy See, the Monastery of Tours hastened to adopt them.

A circular of 1735 makes known to us that Mother d'Anisy had the consolation of giving the black veil to three novices, and of receiving some good postulants. Their dowries were quite considerable, and were used in paying off debts the Sisters had assumed by new buildings, and of purchasing a house belonging to the Hellie family. Several vocations issued from that truly Christian family. The same circular makes mention of the generous alms that had been given by the monastery to relieve a multitude of poor people who were deprived of all resources.

Mother Moisan was reelected in 1739 for the sixth and last time. "It was especially during her last term of superiority," the Annals tell us, "that the hand of God seemed to make this holy soul similar to her crucified Spouse. He made use of contradictions and sufferings of all kinds, and an array of other crosses which are ordinarily the instruments He makes use of for the rounding out of those perfections He wishes to find in His chosen servants. The love of God and of the neighbor, patience and annihilation of self became her ordinary occupations."

Mother Moisan secretly longed for the rest her deposition would bring her. She had this consolation in the month of May, 1742. But the time that was left her now was to be a continual preparation for death. Her increasing infirmities inspired continual disquiet in the Sisters. Happy in the solitude of her cell, Mother Moisan wanted to deliberate on eternity, although she was ever anxious for the well-being of the convent. When her health permitted she would disengage the Mistresses of the Classes. These were her last efforts in the salvation of souls.

Some days before the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus she was in the ante-choir preparing to go into the Office, when a sudden faintness came over her, and the Sisters were obliged to carry her to the infirmary. She was unconscious for several hours, and could not recover her speech entirely. The fear of the judgments of God followed her through her life, and penetrated her soul; during her last days on earth she was much troubled still with those fears; this terror betrayed itself in the most expressive manner; her gestures, her countenance were so filled with this fear that the Sisters were appalled, and could hardly restrain their tears. The confessor was called; he spoke to her, urging her to have confidence in God, and renewed to her the absolution. The efficacy of this Sacrament was seen immediately, for peace reentered her soul. She peacefully expired on October 21, 1743.

A celebrated Religious, who had known Mother Moisan most intimately, wrote thus to the Superioress of Guingamp:

> The death of Mother M. of Saint Catherine Moisan is a loss for the Order in general and for the city of Tours in particular. In fact, she was esteemed and looked upon as a prodigy, on account of the success that crowned her work in the establishment of a holy religious house, and in such a manner as to gain many souls to God. Simple, without affectation, prudent without artifice, zealous without indiscretion; she was sincerely pious, had an exquisite judgment, a wonderfully firm character, but sweet withal, and her charity was inexhaustible; I know the esteem that the Archbishop had for her, having often been in the convent with his Grace, who was at the same time their immediate superior. For she had the skilful tact and hardihood, if I may say so, of asking this favor of him when the parish priest of Saint Symphorian died.

We shall complete this eulogium in recalling that, after Mother M. of the Trinity Heurtant, Mother Moisan was the Religious of Our Lady of Charity who had the greatest zeal in propagating the devotion to the Sacred Hearts, and veneration for the memory of the Blessed founder. She implanted those two devotions deep in the hearts of the Sisters and inmates of those two Monasteries of Guingamp and Tours. And she was no less anxious in spreading it among the people. There is another virtue that merits to be especially signalized: her confidence in God in the midst of all kinds of difficulties that poverty occasioned her in the monastery. With all her poverty, she would have them open the doors to all the novices and Penitents that asked admittance. The human prudence of the benefactors and the Archbishops forbade her to receive the former without dowry and the latter without pension; this prohibition was a hard trial to her motherly heart. But in many circumstances we have seen that she realized what the Blessed Eudes had several times announced: if the good Mother could follow her charitable tastes and desires the temporal goods of the house and spiritual blessings would have been distributed in abundance on all the souls who lived there; on the contrary, the source of all Divine favors seemed to dry up when the order was given to be careful of the resources of the Community.

CHAPTER IV

SUPERIORITY OF MOTHERS M. OF SAINT PLACIDE AND M. AIMEE OF JESUS HELLIE, M. MADELINE OF JESUS TABAREAU, M. OF SAINT ROSE GIROLET — EXTREME POVERTY OF THE MONASTERY — GOVERNMENT OF MOTHERS M. OF SAINT CATHERINE D'AVEAU AND M. OF SAINT JOSEPH LE ROUX

MOTHER M. of Saint Placide Hellie was elected superioress for the first time in the month of April, 1748. She was the first professed of the monastery that was elevated to that dignity. Her energy and generosity were noticed from her entrance into the novitiate. The convent was only seven years in existence; poverty was extreme and financial accounts at a very low ebb. Mlle. Hellie knew perfectly its situation, for her family had been living in a house that later was sold to the monastery. Although these pecuniary troubles were dwelt on in her presence this strong and noble soul was anxious to enter, and really did so when she was only sixteen years old. At the end of her novitiate she was terrified by violent scruples concerning the gravity of the obligations of the religious life, and they troubled her exceedingly. She triumphed over them after three months of trial, the victim that was immolated to the Lord was very pleasing to Him, for she was ornamented with innocence and many other virtues.

After her profession Sister M. of Saint Placide gave herself up with great courage and goodwill to all the occupations imposed on her by obedience. During ten years her poor health kept her in the infirmary; this time of trial was not lost, however. Having no employment she applied herself to the study of the Holy Scriptures and other spiritual authors. The knowledge that she thus acquired was very useful for the proper direction of the monastery. We can say that at the moment of her election she was well fitted for the exercise of authority; her government was full of sweetness.

At that time the Community was composed of twenty-six Choir Religious and six Lay-Sisters. They had about twenty boarders and as many Penitents. There was no assurance of provisions for so many persons; during the years of scarcity their existence was a continuous prodigy, for the work they did brought hardly any remuneration. We understand, however, that the Penitents worked; in fact, were very skilful artificers in church vestments and embroideries; this occupation seems to have been particularly lucrative.

The monastery was severely tried by deaths during this superiority. The last Religious that had come from Guingamp went to Heaven to receive the crown of their laborious life. Of this number was Sister M. of Jesus Pacifique l'Esne. The monastery was deeply concerned over her loss, for she was a very efficient secretary. Some of the circulars written during that time were by her pen; the reader will readily understand what the Annals say of her, that her gaiety made her the life of the recreations. She slept sweetly in the Lord on April 5, 1753.

The reputation for fervor that the Sisters enjoyed rendered them the object of the favors and the confidence of the Archbishops of Tours. The Most Reverend M. de Rastignac, and later on Most Reverend M. Rosset de Fleury, nearly always presided at their elections. These prelates confided to them those Religious who were imbued with the Jansenistic principles, and whom they wished to bring back to the truth; it was also in their house that they placed the Religious of the different Orders whose convents for different reasons were suppressed. The Annalist observes that, on account of the difference of costumes and other religious usages of those Religious, their monastery slightly resembled Noah's Ark. The Sisters had to make particular efforts to conserve their own spirit in the midst of this variety. They were very pleased when Archbishop de Fleury made other arrangements, and delivered them for a time from those strange Religious.

The zeal of the Sisters was well rewarded by the conversion of a sincere Calvinist Penitent. She was born in Strasbourg; her life had been a strangely agitated and criminal one. The Archbishop of Tours tried in vain to find out if she was baptized. He then wished to confer conditional baptism on her, himself, and receive her abjuration, which he did amidst a vast concourse of the most distinguished people of the city. Many persons could not get in for the ceremony on account of the narrowness of the chapel; this produced some discontent among the society leaders, who would have been delighted to see the proceedings.

Soon after a second abjuration permitted the Sisters to satisfy anew the curiosity that those ceremonies excited. This time it was a young girl of good family who was placed in the convent by a Royal order. She had given proofs of great obstinacy, but when truth took possession of her mind she wished to give herself entirely to God, and begged to be admitted to the novitiate. Monastic usages at first appeared childish to her; yet, notwithstanding her repugnance, her generosity never diminished. Later on she recognized, and recognizing, she realized that there is nothing small in the service of God; so after a fervent novitiate she became an excellent Religious.

These consoling facts were not at all rare in the Monasteries of Our Lady of Charity. How many souls owe not only their salvation but also the merits of all the virtues to the Religious who taught them how to practice those life-giving deeds, those wonderful acts that drew them to God!

These consoling conversions must be attributed to the infinite mercy of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. We know that at that time the Sisters worked actively in the propagation of this worship. They wrote to Caen to reanimate the zeal of the Sisters of that monastery, and to hasten the printing of a little Manual of the Confraternity of the Sacred Hearts. They had a great desire that the members would multiply speedily. Sister M. of Saint Placide Moulins, of Caen, had commenced this work. The Annals state that with this manual they sent also a Life of the Blessed Eudes, composed and printed twenty-four years previous by Father Costil. It was the first time this publication was mentioned.

During the superiority of Mother M. of Saint Placide, the city of Tours was ravaged by a terrible hurricane. The Annals estimate the losses at more than fifteen millions. The loss occasioned the monastery was considerable, and this disaster, joined to an inundation a few years later, and coupled with a reduction in rents, caused great havoc and placed matters in a serious condition, which we shall soon note.

In 1754 Mother M. Aimee of Jesus Hellie was replaced by her sister. Trials were not spared her during the three years she was in charge; death snatched away several young Sisters on whom the Community had founded great expectations, and worse still, the novitiate was completely deserted. As she was unable to fill all the employments Mother Hellie asked Caen for assistance. The Sisters of the first monastery generously sent Sister M. of Saint Louis de Bernieres de Gavrus, with one novice. She soon made her profession, but death laid its icy grip upon her, so she did not render much service to the convent. Sister M. of Saint Louis was named Directress of the Novitiate. Upon her arrival at her post the novitiate was repeopled as if by magic, and during her too short stay in Tours this Sister had the consolation of preparing several good subjects for profession. Unfortunately for the Convent of Tours the Sisters recalled this excellent Religious after three years, shortly after the reelection of Mother M. of Saint Placide.

This Mother was already attacked with cancer, which ended her life three years later. So she demanded that they would not place her name on the catalogue of eligibles. Bishop Rosset de Fluery would not listen to her plea. The Sisters saw her again at their head; although this good Mother suffered much she kept up fervor among them.

During this second superiority of Mother Saint Placide the monastery was under the ban of the police. The reception of a new-comer among the Penitents was the occasion of the trouble. The officers of justice demanded to know on whose order that person had been received; the Sisters replied it was by the wish of her parents; this did not satisfy them, and they made terrible threats. Father de la Coste, superior of the convent, seeing the bad turn the affair was taking, took a radical measure and told the Mother Superior to put all the Penitents out, and not to receive them back before eight days, and then at their own request. This news threw the poor girls into the greatest consternation; their tears and cries upset the poor Sisters to such a degree that they would not have obeyed it had the order not been so formal. Sent adrift, these poor sheep without the fold, having nowhere to go, kept running around the convent walls, begging to be taken back. Finally, they decided to go to the Archbishop, where, falling on their knees before the Vicar-General, they besought him to allow them to be taken back. In the absence of the Archbishop this ecclesiastic had them sign a declaration in which they declared that they were enclosed in the monastery of their own free will, and then ordered the Mother Superior to open the doors to them. The unpleasantness resulting from the vexation of the justices was at once changed by such a demonstration, for it was a clear proof that the Penitents were there of their own volition. If, in our own days, such a thing were done betimes by some of the Communities our system of government would be perhaps more tolerant.

In 1760 it was plain to be seen that the ever-increasing weakness of Mother M. of Saint Placide would not permit her reelection. She was then deposed and replaced by Mother M. Madeline of Jesus Tabareau. Sister M. of Saint Placide, happy in being discharged from the burden of the superiority, said to the Sisters: "It is high time that I would be disengaged from other affairs, and think only of preparing myself for eternity." God granted her only a few months for this preparation, but this fervent soul employed them to the purpose. It was during those months of painful suffering that her heroic patience shone with an ever-increasing brightness; nothing could interrupt her union with God. During the last days of her life all human aid proved useless; it was a new motive for her to cast her entire confidence in God; she was often heard to repeat: "My God, I have no longer any need but Yourself; all that this earth holds is useless to me; I expect help and succor from Your mercy." The Mother Superior asked her one day why she was so silent; she replied: "Mother, henceforth I wish to speak to God alone; it is from Him I shall obtain the grace to finish my career without losing patience during my hours of pain and anguish." Her sad existence lasted three weeks after she had received the Last Sacraments. God called her to Himself on August 28, 1761, and recompensed her life of virtue with a crown of glory in the heavens.

It was during the government of Mother Tabareau that the suppression of the Jesuits took place. From the foundation of Our Lady of Charity in Tours those good Religious never ceased to render signal services to the monastery. It was, thanks to their zeal, that this house was not submitted to the influence of Jansenism. The Annals say that this destructive heresy was then at its greatest height in the diocese. The priests who refused the Sacraments to those notorious adepts were pursued, exiled or imprisoned, if they were caught. The Sisters had the consolation to have at all times confessors entirely submissive to the decisions of the Church.

Under the administration of Mother Tabareau the financial condition of the convent was bad enough. But it became worse still after the election of Mother M. of Saint Rose Girolet, on account of the many losses and the different purchases that were useful but unproductive. This Mother, whose amiability made Archbishop de Fleury call her the *Rose without thorns,* did not appear to have been the cause of this troubled condition of affairs, but she met with insurmountable obstacles.

Several novices came there. The old Sisters, through excessive delicacy of conscience, thought themselves obliged to warn them that even the existence of the house was compromised. In reading this history we can readily understand how necessary are discretion and prudence in similar cases. These young persons left. Their doweries would, however, have been very useful to readjust matters, and relieve the convent of its debt and embarrassment. This discouragement weighed heavily on the Sisters; several of them, each a prey to its evil consequences, took steps to obtain admission in other monasteries, in case this monastery would be suppressed.

Mother Girolet, on the contrary, worked with all her power to save it from that fate, assured that the glory of God was at stake on account of the Penitents. She proposed to the Sisters that they should make a vow to receive the first who wished to enter among the Penitents, without requiring board, as a means to draw down the mercy of heaven. It was a generous thought; God blessed it. Soon after, through the recommendation of Archbishop de Fleury, Mlle. de Menou began to interest herself in this poor monastery. Her generous liberality deserves for her the title of foundress—at least second foundress. One thing absorbed her mind; that was to enable the monastery to receive a great number of Penitents; so she said to the Archbishop: "Your Grace will take charge of the faithful sheep, and I will take care of the wanderers."

Archbishop de Fleury was very devoted to the Sisters, and sought means to aid them; but his efforts were powerless. He sent a supplication to the King, on their behalf, but it had no other effect than a formal order forbidding the Religious to receive any more novices. Heart-broken, the Archbishop tried another means to save the monastery; so it was arranged that the Ladies of the Annunciation would unite with the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity, and that the goods they enjoyed would revert to them. Eleven Religious of the Annunciation came then to live in the convent that a century before their Sisters had abandoned. They died shortly, one after the other, as they were all worn out, and thus the Charity was dowered with a revenue of about 3,000 livres. It was saved from ruin.

Soon after Mother M. of Saint Catherine d'Aveau was elected, in 1773, and Archbishop de Fleury was replaced in the See of Tours by Archbishop de Cauzie. Like his predecessor, this prelate showed himself very devoted to the Sisters. He had much zeal and ability as a financier in regard to the worries of the convent; his efforts were so crowned with success, as the Annals joyously relate, that at the end of the year 1778 the Sister Econome found herself in possession of 1,000 livres, with all expenses paid. This had never happened before since the foundation; the personnel of the monastery never had been so numerous; a circular-letter of 1777 tells us that at that time the personnel of the convent numbered one hundred and twenty. The number among the Penitents was thirty-three; several of them were paying board. The Sister Secretary expressed lively regrets, "because," she said, "these poor girls imagined they were necessary; they were very exacting in regard to their food, working little; therefore, their conduct was disagreeable."

The Sisters of Tours were faithful to their Rules and observances, especially to that Rule which demands them to send each year Community letters. It was because of these letters that this history was written. They not only served to cement union and charity, but also to save from oblivion many interesting facts.

We have a few details concerning Mother M. of Saint Joseph le Roux, who was elected on May 30, 1779. She was born at Arras in 1738. Under the protection of Archbishop de Fleury her father had resided in Tours, and occupied the position of Supreme Judge in that city. Mlle. le Roux got her education in the Abbey Royal of Beaumont where Madame the Princess of Vermandois was Abbess. The young child made great progress in this school, both in science and virtue; her intelligence was so precocious and quick that she knew how to read as well at five years of age as others at twenty.

Mlle. le Roux left the Abbey while still very young, wishing to have a taste of the world and its fanciful pleasures; society claimed her; soon she became the queen of the fashionable world, where she displayed her wit and wisdom. She lived thus in a whirl of dissipation until she was twenty-six years old. God made use of this singularly attractive life to show her the dangers lurking in those idle places of amusement: He made her see that her eternal salvation was at stake; but it was by a wonderful sermon preached by Father Rabateau, a very distinguished priest and Vicar-General, that He proved conclusively that she was on the broad road to perdition. Much impressed, Mlle. le Roux wished to make known to him the state of her soul. Father Rabateau, being an able and skilful director, understood immediately to what a height of sanctity his new penitent could rise by the practice of all the virtues; he showed her and taught her the narrow way that leads surely and securely to Heaven, and made her see how far afield she had wandered. Under his firm guidance Mlle. le Roux soon dropped her worldly tastes; in short, she felt that the world was no longer a safe abiding place; hence, she must have a higher call, and he directed her thoughts towards the religious life. Father Rabateau directed her thoughts and aspirations towards the Charity, and went, himself, to ask for her admission.

M. le Roux loved his daughter very dearly; he wished that she would have a varied knowledge; she responded to her parent's wishes, and became as cultured in mind as she was beautiful in person. So the thought of being separated from her, who was his idol, caused him severe affliction when he became acquainted with her determination. The battle between faith on one hand and nature on the other was intense; but M. le Roux was so deeply and truly Christian that he could not long hold out against giving his consent. To spare this beloved father a heart-breaking scene Mlle. le Roux went away secretly from home, and entered the monastery before he knew she had left. His was the pain, but her portion was repose and peace.

From her entrance into the novitiate she practiced the Rule in all its rigor, and utterly refused any mitigation proposed through the charity of the Sisters for her. To the peace enjoyed for the first few days was added bitterness and trouble; the demon endeavored to play a game of chance with her, in the hope that he would be victorious. He showed her all she had lost in giving up her father, that doting father who loved her to excess; he made her see the poverty of her surroundings in contrast with her former luxuries; it went so far that it seemed to Mlle. le Roux, that she never could be happy away from her father and her father's house. Happily, her guide showed her that it was all a temptation, or rather a series of temptations, which in a short time and with a little patience would quickly disappear.

This was really what happened, and after a fervent novitiate, Sister M. of Saint Joseph made her profession. Father Rabateau continued to direct her with his accustomed ability. During a retreat he asked her for an account of her dispositions. Sister M. of Saint Joseph having told him that, to see if she made progress, she had taken for her spiritual reading "The Progress in the Spiritual Life," by Father Guillore, her Reverend guide told her that was a piece of presumption which he did not expect of her, and he added: "It is for me and not you, yourself, to judge of your progress. Have the goodness to leave that book on the shelf, and take in its stead the 'Introduction to a Devout Life,' by Saint Francis de Sales." The Sister obeyed with the greatest simplicity. This virtue was the one oftenest referred to by her biographer; she had neither great consolations nor great aridities; the common life was her way by predilection, and she never changed.

Her first employment was that of gardener, but shortly after she was appointed econome. It was in this function that she rendered the greatest services to religion. If the House of Tours did not go under in the midst of the difficulties we have mentioned it was due in a great measure to her ability. Her conduct in this charge was regulated by the maxim, that in Communities there are and should not be any little expenses nor little economies. Some Sisters thought that she was too economizing, perhaps; that as she herself had excellent health she could not realize the needs of the sick and infirm. But a moment's reflection sufficed to recall to her the passage in the Rule: "The Servant of God must be believed simply," and she gave quickly what she at first refused.

When she was elected superioress in 1779 Mother M. of Saint Joseph applied herself to maintain union and charity among the Sisters. Some of them, who had not known the financial condition or the hard times, thought this good Mother too reserved in receiving voluntary Penitents, that through zeal for the fourth vow she should show herself more lenient in admitting them. Mother le Roux, seeing only in this gentle criticism their good intentions, had the grace not to be offended, and continued to follow the lights that God had given her, striving to gain the goodwill of those who were opposed to her or who did not approve of her conduct. By these wise proceedings she succeeded in conquering their antipathy, and maintaining harmony in the monastery.

CHAPTER V

EXPULSION OF THE SISTERS —THEIR IMPRISONMENT

MOTHER M. of Saint John d'Ausserre succeeded Mother M. of Saint Joseph in 1785. We know nothing of her administration nor of her life. She was in charge when the Revolution burst on France. The Abbe Rolland has gathered all that was possible to find regarding those terrible years. We shall, then, leave the pen to him, and borrow the following pages:

Impiety audaciously raised its head, and Christian souls were full of painful forebodings. In the beginning of 1789 the parish priest of Saint Hilary, Father Lacretelle, exhorted his parishioners from the pulpit to return to God. He pointed out to them the chastisements of God in the famine that had come to them, in the inclemency of the seasons, and he feared not to predict terrifying things for the future, if France would not return to God. These predictions were quickly realized; they were already at hand.

One of the first deeds of the National Assembly was to abolish solemn vows, and to decree a diminution of religious houses. The spirit of evil has instincts that can hardly deceive. The ring-leaders of the Revolution had nothing more at heart than the destruction of religion, but they realized that it would not be wise to unveil their secret designs, and under the pretext of reform they dealt a mortal blow to the religious life. It was done with diabolical skill; they first attacked the evangelical counsels, to arrive more surely at the ruin of all moral and Christian law.

On October 29, 1789, the National Assembly decreed the abolition of solemn vows, and proclaimed an interdict against receiving new subjects to the religious life. The King immediately ratified the decree. On February 13, 1790, the National Assembly, which had already taken the first step, went further still, and after having decreed the suppression of religious houses of every Order it announced that in France monastic vows of both sexes were no longer obligatory. The King sanctioned this decree on the 19th of the same month.

Our Religious received this absurd decree with the deepest sorrow: all were happy in their bonds, and we shall see later on that not one among them consented to quit her convent before the day when they were expelled forcibly. Moreover, this decree could not trouble their tranquility; they knew that it was not within the power of man to dissolve the engagements they had taken on themselves at the foot of God's holy aftar. Their inner consciousness told them they were the sworn brides of Christ, and this absurd pretension of a lay assembly only served to render their sacred bonds more dear and precious to them, for had they not made them by their own free will!

The Assembly had also decreed the day after the vows were declared abolished that the goods of the Church belonged to the Nation; some emoluments were granted to the Religious who would abandon their convent, seeking thus to drag them into infidelity and apostacy by the decoy they held out to them. The goods of the convents were confiscated to the municipalities, the directories, the districts and departments. In order that the Nation would not be frustrated in its designs concerning these goods, which did not belong to it by any title, the Assembly decreed that from the 14th to the 20th of April the municipalities would make an inventory of the title-deeds, papers, furniture, sacred vessels and ornaments belonging to the different parishes and Communities. On September 7th following the district of Tours named M. Baignoux to go to the Convent of Rich and take the inventory ordered by law. We have here under our eyes this inventory, made without giving any estimation of the articles, except the silver, which was docketed for fifty-six marks, two ounces, two gros.*

In the month of November the Municipality of Tours occupied itself with the poor of the city† and the means of helping them, thus finding occasion to air their sympathies for the Community of the Refuge. We believe it is our duty to relate these words of homage rendered to a convent at the same moment when, through those inconsistencies too common among men, they thought only of suppressing them. "This is another establishment that the administration ought to protect; it is a foundation of intrinsic value set aside for girls who have wandered from the path of rectitude, and are desirous of changing their vicious lives. The Religious of Our Lady of Charity, who own this foundation, labor for this end by sweetness, charity, instructions and exhortations; they never employ corporal chastisements. It is the only establishment of the kind that exists in this department."

One of the most terrible trials to which the Religious were submitted was the execution of the law of the month of September, which prescribed an election of a superioress and an econome in all the convents. The Municipality of Tours ordered them to put this law in execution at once, and sent a municipal officer to the Convent of Rich on January 26, 1791, to proceed to the election of a superioress and an econome. What were the Religious to do? This election, not in accordance nor with the consent of the ecclesiastical authority, could not be valid. The Sisters questioned among themselves, could they in conscience cooperate by giving their suffrages? On the other hand, if they refused they would only excite the anger of the municipality. What were they to do? The pious ladies thought it would be only prudence on their side if they would submit exteriorly to the law; they consented to the election; but they kept in their charges those who already occupied them by virtue of a regular election, sanctioned by ecclesiastical authority. When the municipal officer saw the name of her who had been already superioress, Mother M. Dausierre (Sister M. of Saint John Baptist), taken out of the urn twenty-six times, he got very angry. This ridiculous irritation did not trouble the Sisters for a moment, and they voted with the same unanimity for keeping Mother le Roux in charge of the econome, which she had fulfilled with so much zeal and regularity. The municipal officers absolutely wished that the Religious would bend beneath their tyrannical yoke, and pretended to restrain them by these elections, as childish as they were irregular. They were so persuaded that those good ladies were unhappy that they left them no power, no liberty, no chance to extricate themselves from their thraldom; taking them one by one they interrogated them, with laughable solicitude; only one made some complaints, which could not have been very serious, since the process-verbal did not consider this complaint worth mentioning. How shall I express the disappointment of the municipal officer when he found out that he had been deceived? With a feeling of ill-humor, which he tried hard to hide, he said to the Religious: "Well, since you are absolutely determined to have this superioress, keep her." They did not ask anything better.

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*Here is the inventory of the silver plate of the convent: A holy water pot, holy water sprinkler, a censer, the boat and spoon, six large candlesticks, a flat candlestick, six cruets and six silver basins, one choir lamp and chain, three chalices with paten and two tables, an Ostensorium, silver gilt, with some precious stones.

†Their number was raised at that time to 5,884.

This hard trial was followed a few days later by one more severe. On March 14th Reverend Peter Suzor, parish priest of d'Ecueille, was named Bishop of the Department of d'Indre-et-Loire, and the good Sisters, faithful up to that time, refused to recognize his authority. They were then banned as Constitutionalists, as they were called; the populace threatened more than once to invade their convent under the pretext that they had in hiding unsworn priests. The disturbers increased, and the threats became so grave that the Municipality was provoked. On May 2d they had a deliberation, during which it was decided to ask the Ladies of Our Lady of Rich not to receive into their house any refractory priests, those who did not take sides with the law, and to give no reason for suspicion in that regard. To give more sanction to this deliberation they decided that they would send to the said Ladies the Commandant of the National Guard, who would prevent any uprisings among the people. It was necessary to give those orders more than once, so the municipal officers went themselves, to find out if those terrible convents did not hide nonconformist priests. It is hardly credible that the Commune in our days rehearse these disgusting comedies. They visited the entire house—the basement, the attics, and outhouses—to see if the poor inoffensive Sisters were not hiding priests or weapons.

In the midst of those various trials the good Sisters were reduced to a state of want bordering on misery. The nation had declared itself landed proprietor and owner of all their goods and chattels, even their very revenue; the amount to be given to each one, as a sort of sop, was not yet determined, but they received very insufficient means to aid them to live. They felt there was a necessity to demand their rights. If they did not and were too submissive their oppressors might neglect to send them remittances. Of course they were willing to suffer privations, and would have been too happy to confess their faith under such stress of circumstances, but there were the Penitents, and their needs could not be overlooked. In the beginning of the year 1792 they sent in a petition to the Department to be recognized as creditors of the Nation. They had received a considerable sum of money in 1776, which had been levied on the clergy of France, and the Chapter of Tours gave the Sisters a rental of nine hundred francs. These different sums had been given for the penitent women, and the Religious could claim the title of administrators of the work. The district receiving the petition seized the occasion of rendering homage to the devotedness of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity, and declared that their convent should be ranked among the houses of Charity whose existence the National Assembly had voted for. At the same time the Religious had not sufficient means to live and, in fine, after interminable considerations, according to the method of the times, the district was advised—

"That the House of the Refuge, established in the aforesaid Convent of Our Lady of Charity of the town of Tours, should continue to exist until the National Assembly had decreed the formation of schools and of houses of instruction and education; considering, also, that this establishment, since its formation, had been of great utility to a multitude of families who had the misfortune of having unruly daughters whose morals were degraded, and who by the wise instructions and exhortations of their mentors, the Religious, have been brought back to the amenities of an honest life; so to be deprived of that house of retreat would be prejudicial to society; that this house ought to be a recognized creditor of the nation:

"1. Of the third part of the yearly income of the aforesaid clergy of France by the contracts dated September 20, 1776, October 1, 1785, and September 20, 1786, making altogether eight hundred and twenty-five francs, with the principal of 20,000 francs.

"2. Of the third part of the rent settled by the aforesaid Chapter of Saint Gatien of Tours, by the notes dated August 5, and December 26, 1782, and June 24, 1784, making altogether the sum of two hundred and forty francs, the principal being 7,000 francs.

"That the House of the Refuge be henceforth under the administration and surveillance of the Municipality of Tours; that to this effect the right of revenue or annuity for the use of the house be paid to a commissary, whom it shall name, who will receive said annuity and will give it to the superior or econome of the Convent of Our Lady of Charity, to be employed for the needs of the House of the Refuge, of which she shall render an account to the Municipality.

It was a recognition of the right of the Religious, but it was also a declaration of their subjection to a municipality which would gain considerably by its administration of their house. There was no means of avoiding this absolute dependence; they had to submit, but they did not lose sight of the bickerings to which their submission submitted them; however, all these unavoidable worries and afflictions drew down celestial blessings on their labors. One of the first vexations they had to submit to was a species of control which the Municipality strove to exercise over the Constitutions. This trial regulated their devotedness and ennobled their humble and daily toil. They were obliged to submit to the Municipality the keeping of their vows by which they had engaged themselves in the religious state, and on February 1st two Touriere Sisters had to bring to the Bureau of the Municipality a letter from the superioress and econome, containing an extract of the Constitutions and Institute of the Convent of the Refuge. They also brought a copy of the Rules of the Order. Our municipal officers took stock of these different documents, and deigned to remark that they were approved by the authority of the Pope, and recognized that the Religious of Our Lady of Charity were truly obliged to enclosure. Consequently, they notified them that they would be on hand at the convent the following Friday at nine o'clock in the morning, in order to state the legality of the existence and also "to see the financial condition presented by the econome."

Having arrived at the convent the municipal officers questioned the Sisters, and took a list of those that consented to remain. Each one protested anew her fidelity to her obligations and the religious life; not one wished to profit by the pretended liberty that was offered.

Towards the end of May the Nation had need of one of the houses belonging to the monastery, and which had served as a residence for the chaplain. The Religious, learning that it wished to take this house from them, had recourse to the

Directory of the district, which this time did not wish to look favorably on their just request. The Religious explained that the chaplain's house formed a part of the enclosure; but the commissaries charged with examining the place alleged that the house was not essentially a part of the enclosure, since it had no communication with the convent; that the walls of the neighboring houses were lower; were they to get any more they would be obliged to suffer from the inconvenience; that the Nation was not obliged to furnish a residence for chaplains of Communities it had accepted; that, besides, it was for the advantage of the Nation that this house be sold. This last reason was peremptory, and the Directory of the district esteemed it so on June 1st; there was no occasion to continue any further deliberations on this request of the Religious.

The chaplain, Father Gauvin, was faithful to the Church, and would not betray its interests.

New troubles, more serious still, came to overwhelm them. During a deliberation of the Municipal Council of June 27, 1792, we find a proof that the Christian education given to children at that time bore fruit, and the glory of it was centered on the religious Communities. Several of these young people steadily refused to pay respect to constitutional ministers. Several among their relatives, zealous citizens, wished to oppose "those innocent victims of fanaticism . . . for troubling the public tranquility and causing irremediable evil,"[3] and warned the Municipality. They declared that their children had received in those Communities and in their houses the first principles that were absolutely contrary to the Constitution. The municipal counsellors, ashamed, without doubt, at having been prevented in the observance of the law or, we should say, prevented from showing off their ill-regulated zeal, soon decreed, in virtue of Article III of the law of March 22, 1791, that all persons of both sexes, without any distinction, charged with public instruction, would be obliged, eight days after the publication of the municipal deliberation, to take the civil oath, under pain of being stripped of all their rights empowering them to "teach school or keep boarders." The decree was published, printed and affixed.

But the Directory of the district was not completely of the same opinion as the Municipality; it found the other was too absolute in its requirements. The district established two catagories among the institutors and institutions, and it placed the Religious of the Refuge in that body which was obliged to take the oath. It declared, in effect, that they belonged to the University, because they kept public and gratuitous schools.

On July 4th the Municipality advised different Religious of the deliberation that concerned them. Between this sad alternative of the taking of the oath, which they would not submit to at any cost, or closing their house, which seemed to them as hard an extremity, the Religious of the Refuge wrote to a member of the National Assembly to know if there did not remain a solitary hope for saving them. Here is the letter written by Mother Daussierre, the superioress, to the Municipality, dated July 25th:

Gentlemen: We received a copy of your resolutions which gives us eight days, after which consideration on our part, we must look upon ourselves as bereft of the right of educating our young boarders. We respect the laws, gentlemen, and we have warned the families of your decree; but all those to whom we have written claim our care for their children until the board money for the term is exhausted; we trust your benevolence in this matter will lead you to reconsider this in favor of the citizens whom you will oblige as well as ourselves. We will not conceal from you, gentlemen, that we feel ourselves included with the congregations of public functions; we are addressing ourselves to the National Assembly.

Here is a reply that has been lately made to us:

"A few days ago a question arose concerning what you spoke to me about: a member of the Municipality wrote to the National Assembly to ask if the Religious could keep the boarders and if they ought not to pay for a license for the boarding school. The Assembly referred the question to one of its committees to find out what they ought to say. When the decree has been settled I shall inform you; moreover, there will soon be a law concerning this very subject. It appears that the Municipality of Paris does not take the part of those Religious who keep boarders in their houses."

I supplicate you, gentlemen, to take into consideration the instructions that have been given us, and come to some conclusion, so we can enjoy that tranquility of which we are deprived, without even knowing that we are conforming to your wishes. A word in reply will calm us, for we are truly very disquieted.

The only response the Municipality deigned to return to the Mother Superior's letter was: "There is no necessity to deliberate."

Some days previous they had been denounced to the Municipality, as persons not wishing to take the oath exacted by the resolution of June 27th. We are ignorant of the measures that were then taken, but there was a municipal officer, M. Ducreux, in the Convent of Rich, on the 13th of the following August. He came there in the capacity of Commissary of Prisons to interview the women of ill-fame who were there, and had a process-verbal drawn up of all that he had seen and heard. Those visits were made many times over, and they were not one of the least of the worries of the Religious, afflicted at seeing the solitude and peace of their cloister destroyed by such happenings.

On August 16th they were the objects of importunate requisitions, and the superioress was obliged to declare for the fourth or fifth time that they had no weapons nor any clergy hidden in the convent. "We have no strangers in the Community," she said; "only one domestic and two girls."

The day of their departure was not far distant, and the good Sisters had a presentiment of it.

On September 15th the Ursuline Nuns sent to the Municipality of Tours an energetic and courageous protestation against the decree which had ordered the closing of their house, because they had not consented to take the oath that was demanded of them, in quality of public instructors. Mayhap they went too far—were not prudent enough in writing a letter wherein they declared "that they protested in advance, as well in their own name as in that of all the Communities of the city and territory of Tours, against all the acts of violence that were being exercised in their regard, in order to expel them from their convents; against all the abuse of authority, against all the outrages that had been committed against their persons and properties, against pillage, and the iron hand of assasins. They render you responsible, gentlemen, before God and man: they have placed themselves under your protection, and you ought to safeguard them from danger. It is for you to choose the rank you wish to hold in the history of Touraine: be persecutors of innocence or defenders and protectors of the oppressed."

These eloquent and courageous words did not produce the effect hoped for. They rather irritated the Municipality, and perhaps hastened the measures that the authorities hesitated until then to take—the role of persecutor, and it was in vain that the Ursulines and nearly all the Communities of the city sought to combat the ill effects of that protestation, however legitimate. The letter of the Religious of the Refuge, by which they strove to release themselves of any obligation, was dated September 22, 1792. One month later, on the same day, their house was closed irrevocably.

On October 18th, a municipal officer went to the convent and made a second inventory, which was registered with the one made in 1791; he put the seal on the sacristy, and signified to the Religious that the hour of their departure had struck. Two Sisters were left to guard the seals. They did not remain long, for on the 22nd instant the officers returned, taking away with them all the silver plate of the convent. sending away the two guardians and carrying off the keys of the doors leading on to the suburbs of la Rich and on the Street des Recollets.

Who can depict the deep affliction of the Religious when they stepped across the threshold of that asylum where they had hoped to die? They felt a sorrow similar to that felt by the daughter of a family hunted from the paternal roof by unworthy motives, and who saw the dwelling in which she was born fall into profane hands and for profane purposes, with all the dear souvenirs that constantly recalled to her the honor and glory of her ancestors. They had been born to the religious life in that house; it was there at the foot of that altar that they had pronounced their vows, where they had received so many divine graces; it was there they left their elder Sisters whose presence and the remembrance of whom encouraged them to the practice of those virtues which are most difficult to attain.

If, at least, they had conducted them to the scaffold, when they expelled them from their quiet cloister, they would have been able to render homage to their celestial Spouse; if so, their expulsion would have appeared to them hopeful and joyful. Instead, they were doomed to return to the world which they had practically forgotten, and which offered nothing to them, since it was so full of dangers and scandals. God had pity on them, for they left their beloved monastery sad, yet resigned. They dispersed, carrying with them just what was indispensable, and had been permitted by the Municipality.

The convent was to be reopened. God permitted them, perhaps, to foresee it. On November 20th the Municipality made choice of the Commissaries to whom they gave the charge of taking away the ornaments and goods of the heretofore Convent of Rich. In the month of December they concluded the sale of the furniture.

During the first months of the year 1793 the Monastery of Rich, so often sanctified by prayer and the practice of the highest virtues, became sanctified anew by the suffering and privations of the consecrated virgins of the Lord, who were imprisoned therein for His love. It was a sort of consecration which rendered it forever dear and precious to those who inhabited it, for they were able to continue the pious traditions of their foundresses. By an edict dated March 13th the Department condemned all the Religious to be imprisoned. On March 21st this decree was put into execution in all its rigor. The heretofore Convent of Rich received a great number; if we can credit the testimony of several people, there were about three hundred Religious: the sick, the infirm, those who were bent beneath the weight of years, all were pitilessly thrown into those narrow quarters.* Later they were dispersed through several houses; some were even taken to the neighboring departments, and exposed during the journey to all sorts of offensive language from an intoxicated and foolish populace, rendered acceptable to a sottish revolution.

We must forego describing in detail the sufferings the

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*Several Religious demanded of the district that they be exempted from imprisonment, on account of their infirmities or their age; but the administrators would not listen to their request. A great number of the Religious were ill either on account of the torture they experienced in finding themselves mewed up in that small place, or on account of the excessive heat of the season. The general counsel then issued a decree on July 11, 1793, "that all the Religious who were interned in the heretofore Convent of Rich would be allowed to return to their parishes, bringing a certificate stating that they were sick, and that a longer detention in said house would aggravate their disease."

Sisters had to undergo during the eighteen months their captivity lasted. A bench very frequently had to serve for a bed; their food was insufficient and unfit. Their guards quarreled continuously—the deliberations of the Commune made the law—and the Sisters received no relief nor consolation of any kind from those unlettered and inhuman creatures. Five National Guards had been proposed as caretakers, and one can easily imagine what affronts and injuries those innocent victims had to suffer from their insults. Assuredly, death would have been a thousand times more preferable than to endure such treatment for months together. Several among them contracted sicknesses that carried them to the grave. These words: *Blessed are those who suffer persecution for justice,* was well known to them, and we love to think that divine grace sweetened their bitterness for them.

What would become of their monastery when liberty was again restored to our holy Religious? The inhabitants of Rich had asked for the church, so as to exercise there Catholic worship conformably to that liberty granted by the law of the Second Republican Calendar of the Third Year (April 21, 1795). The Municipality listened favorably to this request, and on the 26th of the Fruit month (September 12, 1795) it placed this edifice at the disposition of the citizens who had asked for it. It imposed on the grantees the charge "of keeping it in good condition, and before using it they should seal the doors with claws, also the windows and other openings that communicated with the said edifice to the courts and other buildings of the heretofore convent, and of closing with brick or masonry all the other outlets that communicated with the street."

The *Catholic* priests kept for the service of this church were no other than the schismatics who were maintained in Tours, on account of their guilty complaisance and shameful degeneracy in adhering to the ideas of the times.* Those priests who had remained faithful were deported or imprisoned in a place selected by the Government. On November 4th they thought of transferring them to the Convent of Rich; the Commissaries named by the Municipality went to examine the place and found it in such a state of dilapidation that they gave up the idea, on account of the considerable expense it would entail. On December 27th they signified to the Municipality that they could not make use of that establishment, which had been "consecrated" since the 29th of the Second Month of the Republican Calendar of the Third Year (December 19, 1794) by the citizen Thenon, Commissary of the War Department, as a lodging for their regiments, "by reason of an insufficient number of old chateaux."

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* In the month of December, 1797, Gabriel Laurence, Commissary of Police, made a report to the Municipality concerning what he had seen in the little chapel of Rich. M. Dubault former constitutional priest of the heretofore convent of Rich, exercised there the Catholic worship. "On our arrival," said the officer, "we found this citizen in the pulpit issuing bands for a forthcoming marriage. We were not able to distinguish the names, not being able to get nearer than the doorway; we did not wish to be recognized; wanted to leave him free to do his publishing; he passed on then to his sermon, which was on the obligation of hearing Mass on Sundays and feasts instituted by the Church; but he did not mention civic feasts. When the office was over we stepped into the chapel, and invited the said citizen to give us the names of the persons whose bands had been published; he obeyed at once, and showed us his register before several citizens. We did not care to take the register with us, afraid lest it might cause an uprising among the people." In his report of the preceding day the Commissary said he had been scandalized at the style of M. Dubault, which was so contrary to that of the Government. (Archives of the Hotel-de-ville.)

The Convent of Rich was sold like all the other religious houses. In 1805 the Carmelites came there to live, and they remained until 1821, when they returned to their former monastery.

During this time the Religious of Our Lady of Charity lived with their families, or among friends, awaiting with prayerful expectancy the end of those terrible events. The First Consul, understanding that France would never be truly great and powerful until it would return to Catholicism, made a Concordat with the august Pius VII, and they endeavored together to find a means to repair the moral ruin of France. This Concordat was signed in Paris on the 27th Messidor of the Ninth Year (July 16, 1801). The Pope ratified it in Rome on August 15th following, and Napoleon declared it the Law of the State on April 5, 1802.

Tranquility seemed to be restored to the political body, and liberty was given to the Church. Christian temples arose throughout the land, monasteries were reopened, and an admirable fecundity was perceptible through the land.

The Monastery of Our Lady of Charity had a large part in this new life. It became one of the most fruitful houses of the Order through the foundations of Angers, Blois, Marseilles and Besancon.

The Monastery of Angers, directed by Mother M. of Saint Euphrasia Pelletier was quickly transformed into a Mother-House. It became the center of the powerful Congregation of the Good Shepherd of Angers, which propagated the work of the Blessed John Eudes throughout the whole world.

SEVENTH MONASTERY—LA ROCHELLE

1715

CHAPTER I

NEGOTIATIONS AND DIFFICULTIES OF THE FOUNDATION

AFTER the Revolution the Monastery of Vannes was not re-established, but it survived in the foundation of La Rochelle, whose history we shall now relate.

About 1712 the Convent of Vannes was, as we have seen, very flourishing. The sap with which the tree of holy religion was vitalized was so abundant that it needed to be poured out on new foundations. The Sisters knew perfectly well that if the Order of Our Lady of Charity did not spread more rapidly, it was attributable to the obscurity in which it remained. They thought it would be for the glory of God and the good of souls if it were better known, and to this end, the following attestation would be copied and sent to the different cities:

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN—*Greeting*:

We, the undersigned, Vicar-General and official of the Diocese of Vannes, do certify that the House of Our Lady of Charity and that of the Retreat, founded and established in this city for a number of years, are two establishments that we can well praise on account of the great work accomplished therein for the glory of God. We also owe this testimony to those two houses, that they are of great benefit in the government of this diocese, on account of the effectual means they make use of for the conversion of women, victims of a scandalous life, whom they bring back to the path of duty and rectitude. We affirm this to be true in every detail; we, ourselves have full knowledge as to the truth of our assertion.

Given at Sarzeau, near Vannes, November 23, 1712.

PIERRE DE CHALONS,
Vicar-General and Official.

I, the undersigned, priest of the Congregation of the Mission, rector of Our Lady of Menez, and superior of the Seminary of Vannes, do certify that the Institute of the Religious Ladies of Our Lady of Charity, established in this city, is, among all the Communities of women, that which appears to me the most conformable to the practice of the evangelical counsels, and especially of charity which is the soul of Religion.

Regularity and the primitive spirit are practiced in all their purity by those holy ladies; they diffuse around them here in Vannes the good odor of Jesus Christ. We honor them as the choice portion of the other monasteries, and as the model of those in need of reformation. Detachment from the world, love of silence and solitude, an angelic modesty, Christian simplicity, love of the interior life, disinterestedness and an ardent zeal for the salvation of souls are the principal characteristics of those illustrious virgins. Happy the cities that possess such treasures; they will find among these holy Religious an assured asylum in which they can place their daughters whose scandalous life is a snare to unwary youth, and a disgrace to their families.

This house is also serviceable for those of their own sex, who may desire to renew themselves in the spirit of Christianity by the exercises of piety. Such is the testimony that I feel obliged to make in justice and truth to the holiness and utility of so important an Institute.

Given at the Seminary of Vannes, December 1, 1712.

RHODES,
Rector of Menez and Superior of the Seminary.

I, the undersigned, rector of Saint Patern, Doctor of the Sorbonne and Vicar and Government Official of Vannes, do certify that, of all the monasteries in this diocese we know of none more capable of contributing to the glory of God and the salvation of souls than the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity, established in this city of Vannes. It would have been better, in our humble opinion, that these holy ladies had been established sooner, on account of the great amount of good they have procured and are continuing to procure every day, in leading souls from a life of scandal and vice and from being a dishonor to their families, to a life of sincere repentance. . . . In Vannes we look upon this establishment as a gift of God, and personally I have often felt the help of their prayers in aiding me to repress sin in others.

VANNES, November 25, 1712. GUILLOUX.

Instead of quoting the influence that heralded this foundation of La Rochelle, the Annals begin by giving the foregoing attestations. We have made use of them because they are the first experiment, and are a magnificent testimonial of important and impartial personages, to the whole Institute. On reading them it is to be hoped that the Sisters will excite themselves to become worthy followers of those of their Sisters, "who are not dead, but gone before."

Did Madame de Sconhel know them? Perhaps. In any case, similar sentiments of esteem and admiration made her desirous of procuring the establishment in La Rochelle.

This lady was the wife of M. d'Estanchingant, Lord of Sconhel, Commissary of the Marine of the Lorient. During a journey with her husband she stayed in the Monastery of Vannes, as a boarder. She said to the Sisters in an off-handed way, while conversing with them one afternoon: "Would you not be astonished if I would have you come to Rochefort?" After that she occasionally reverted to the same conversation, to which nobody attached the slightest importance.

However, such was the beginning of more serious and far-reaching projects. On her return from Rochefort, after the death of her husband, Mme. de Sconhel told them that she had been to Vannes and had seen M. de Cez, parish priest of that town. This virtuous ecclesiastic asked for a memoir. By the request of Mme. de Sconhel, Mother M. of the Trinity le Rebours de Vaumadec sent this memoir, the reading of which decided M. de Cez. He spoke to M. de Beauharnais, Intendant of the Province, and later Minister of Marine, concerning these matters. This worthy gentleman approved of his plans and promised his help.

After these preliminaries, M. le Cure of Rochefort tried to get the consent of the Bishop of La Rochelle. He went to his episcopal palace, and showed him the memoir sent him by Mother le Rebours with the attestations cited above, and declared to him his ideas and intentions. The well-known piety and zeal of Bishop de Champflour did not allow a doubt as to his permission. However, his refusal was absolute, which he founded on the need that his episcopal city had itself of an establishment of the kind and his desire of procuring this benefit for it. He even told M. de Cez to write, himself, to Vannes to ask Religious in his name for a foundation in La Rochelle. The priest, as holy as he was disinterested, wrote in these terms:

Madame: I presented your memoir to the Bishop of La Rochelle. This prelate, having learned the object of my petition, formed at once the resolution of establishing you at Rochelle instead of at Rochefort, which is five leagues further. I left the memoir with his Lordship, as I shall go to see him again tomorrow. I suppose I shall find that he has only strengthened his resolution. I shall be quite pleased, because La Rochelle is much larger and a more important place than

Rochefort, and it is a place where you can be more sure of getting the spiritual and temporal helps you may require.

I am writing to you, Madame, in his name and on his part. You can return him your answer, and testify your extreme gratitude and your willingness to do all in your power to assist him in his noble work. His ability is great. He is not a Court Bishop. You are going to be placed in good hands. . . .

Madame de Sconhel, to whom the wishes of the prelate were known, went to La Rochelle, to begin the same attempts she had already begun in Rochefort. Bishop de Champflour got the information he needed regarding the spirit of those Religious, of their submission to the Bull *Unigenitus,* and of their regularity. Fully reassured on this point, he wrote, himself, to the Mother Superior.*

Madame:

Some time ago I thought of procuring an establishment for penitent women in this city. My greatest perplexity arose from the fact that possibly I would not be able to find the persons proper to take hold of this work and carry it on to a certainty. M. le Cure de Rochefort gave me much unexpected pleasure when he told me of the existence of an Institute founded for this very work of charity, and whose members had consecrated themselves by a fourth vow to the performance of this good work. He added that it had been proposed to him to get those Religious to come to Rochefort and begin an establishment there.

As he told me much that was creditable to you, and spoke to me concerning the proposals he had made to you for the foundation of this establishment, I told him that it would be infinitely better to have the proposed house here in La Rochelle, as the town is much more important, has more inhabitants, and, consequently, greater need of it.

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*Bishop Etienne de Champflour, fourth Bishop of La Rochelle, was a native of Clermont Ferrand, and first saw the light of day on May 19, 1646. His family was both noble and pious. In M. Champflour's testament we see that he gave two of his sons to the Company of Jesus. He with whom we are now occupied entered the Seminary of Saint Sulpice and was formed to virtue and science. After having been some time Vicar-General of Limoges he became Abbe of the Cathedral of Clermont. This important benefice was resigned in his favor by an uncle who was a great admirer of his sacerdotal virtues. M. de Champflour soon governed the whole diocese in the Cape City as Vicar Capitular during the period of mourning of the Church in Clermont. It lasted ten entire years, and during that long administration the Vicar Capitular triumphed in the esteem and affection of all.

Right Reverend M. Francis Bochard de Sarron was named Bishop of the See of Clermont, and continued him in the office of Grand-Vicar with all his former powers, and this choice was universally approved. M. de Champflour exercised these functions with a truly apostolic zeal when, in 1701, the *case of conscience* came to reawaken all the Jansenistic quarrels. On that occasion there was formulated a prohibition made by M. de Champflour to a priest of Clermont for confessing an ecclesiastic who had made open profession of Jansenism. Here is the item: "Can a confessor give absolution to an ecclesiastic who has signed the *formulary,* believing that the Pope and even the Church can be deceived regarding the act?" To reply affirmatively would be to destroy all the decisions of the Sovereign Pontiffs. M. de Champflour pursued, then, the condemnation of the *case of conscience* for the love of truth and of the Church.

In 1702 Louis XIV named him Bishop of La Rochelle. The episcopate of Bishop de Champflour was most remarkable. It was to his generosity and zeal that La Rochelle owed its beneficent work. Schools and hospitals were founded and enriched by his munificence. Called by this holy Bishop, the Blessed Grignon de Montfort gave in the episcopal city one of the most fruitful of his many missions.

But Bishop de Champflour was yet more celebrated by his battles against Cardinal Noailles, Archbishop of Paris. Those battles constitute a page in the history of the Church in France, and it is all to the glory of the Bishop of La Rochelle, known adversary of all Jansenists. Inspired by a holy horror of the heresy this prelate wanted to be well assured that the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity were not imbued with its poison. (*Extract of the notice by the Abbe Stanislas Braud.*)

I am quite satisfied concerning things, as I read with avidity those instructive memoirs that were given me regarding your Institute, as well for the spiritual as the temporal. All that I desire at present is, that you would send me as soon as possible a copy of the letters patent which you got from his Majesty, so we can take measures to obtain similar ones.

The proposition of founding a house in the very center of Protestantism, such as was La Rochelle, terrified the Sisters at first. The letter of Bishop de Champflour appeared to them, under every aspect, a manifestation of the Divine Will. By a capitular act, dated July 20th, the foundation was accepted. Success seemed to be quite certain and near, but difficulties arose on all sides.

Madame de Sconhel, with her able and indefatigable helpers, the Jesuit Fathers, by their united efforts drew to their side the Count de Chamilly, Lieutenant of the King's Armies. in the provinces of d'Aunis, Poitou and Saintonge. Marshal de Chamilly was the uncle of this gentleman. He was much thought of at Court; in conjunction with the Intendant, M. de Beauharnais, he solicited the letters patent from the King. Fearful of compromising the new House of Tours, which the disgrace of the Archbishop might bring about, the Sisters were forced to moderate the ardor of their protectors, and beseech them to await the arrival of the letters patent before taking any further steps.

Those negotiations were kept secret, but gradually they became known, and the consent of the City Corporation was not easily gained. By the cleverness and ability of Mme. de Sconhel, M. de Beauharnais invited the Bishop of La Rochelle, Count de Chamilly, the Mayor of the city, and some other influential gentlemen of the city to dine in his chateau. The repast over, M. de Chamilly, by his eloquence and influence obtained the support of these gentlemen. The consent of the City Corporation and that of the Bureau of Finance was achieved; one was given on December 19th, and the other on December 29th.

Bishop de Champflour informed Mother le Rebours of their success in the following letter:

I did not wish to reply to your letters, Madame, until I could send you a copy of the consent of the City Corporation of La Rochelle, so as to prove to you that now your establishment is certain. We had trouble enough in getting consent; now we can send you a copy. . . .

I am also sending you a letter for the Bishop of Vannes, to get permission for the Religious to come here—that is, those whom you intend or whom you have destined for this foundation.

M. the Count de Chamilly and M. the Intendant have promised me they would write to you on this subject. I have done all I can afford to do on my part; on your side, you can take all the measures you may judge necessary to obtain from your Bishop the requisite permissions. . . .

The letters of MM. de Chamilly and de Beauharnais were sent to Bishop d'Argouge. This prelate was not at all disposed to consent to the departure of the Sisters. First of all, he exacted that they would be supplied with the letters patent, so that the Religious would not be obliged to return. He would not permit them, either, to furnish money necessary for the foundation. In the *Agreement,* signed by the City Corporation, the Bishop of La Rochelle offered 30,000 livres, but the Sisters by their pensions and dowries were to add about 15,000 livres. The reply to those difficulties was easy. The Bishop of Vannes would not hear of it. In his letter to the Bishop of La Rochelle he showed himself very much opposed to the new foundation, and this opposition cost him a great deal; neither could he help showing it to Father Sadry, S. J., superior of his seminary, in whom he placed the most unbounded confidence. This Father realized the disappointment of the Mother Superior, and told her to employ all the means in her power to raise this new and unforeseen obstacle. Mother le Rebours thought then that the best way out of the difficulty would be to propose to the Monastery of Caen to cooperate in the new foundation.

Mother M. of Saint Isidore Hellouin, then superior, being full of zeal for the propagation of the Institute, submitted the request to the counsel, and after the approbation was an assured fact proposed to the Mother in Vannes the proper means to put this plan into execution. Unfortunately, during the interval, the Sisters spoke to Father de Pibrac, superior of Caen, of the differences that existed between the Constitutions followed in Caen and in Vannes. This ecclesiastic, who saw with pained feelings that the Sisters of the new foundation were going to get their dowries, took it on himself to refuse absolutely to give the necessary permissions, and nothing could be done to make him rescind his decision.

Seeing all hope vanish, the Sister of Vannes, supported in their views by the Jesuit Fathers, made new entreaties to urge Bishop d'Argouge to listen to them, telling him that Bishop de Champflour would use all the means in his power to support a foundation of which he, himself, was the author. Finally, the Bishop of Vannes consented to allow three Sisters to go, but would not yield to the demand of the Custom-Book, which required six or seven Religious for a foundation. Mother le Rebours wisely yielded to his orders, hoping that something would happen so she could send more help to the Sisters.

The final happy issue of these negotiations consoled the Bishop of La Rochelle for the length of time they took. In the following letter he told the Mother Superior how glad he was that all was settled:

LA ROCHELLE, August 14, 1715.

Madame:

I have learned with keenest joy and satisfaction that your Bishop has consented at last to your establishment here, and that he has promised to give their obedience to the three Religious for this purpose. You may send them on to us as soon as you judge proper. I have not stopped to consider the site or the house where they will set up their establishment, for I rather think they will wish to satisfy themselves in that matter, and possibly they may have a location in view.

Until they make sure of a proper home for themselves, they can stop for a time with the Hospital Sisters of our city. The superior promised to lodge them in her monastery, where they will be well taken care of. You need not doubt, my dear daughter, of my welcome. I shall certainly grant them my protection, and they can ask anything they wish of me according as occasion may demand; and I will keep all the promises I make, rest assured. . . .

Bishop de Champflour held above everything else to his engagements. He merely chose the subjects destined for the new foundation. Sister M. of the Ascension de la Valette was designated as superioress, Sister M. of Jesus Pitouays for assistant, and Sister M. of Saint Anne Perret was their companion in devotion and sacrifice. Bishop d'Argouge being strongly opposed to sending any novices, Mother le Rebours engaged some young postulants to join the Sisters, in order that their dowries might furnish the sum of 16,000 francs demanded by the City Corporation.

The departure of the Sisters was arranged for August 28th, under the protection of the patriarch of the Order, Saint Augustine. They were to go forth to conquer souls for Christ. They arrived in La Rochelle on September 3, 1715, after a very rapid journey as such was considered in those times when haste was not a factor to be expected. M. Redon, Archdeacon of the Cathedral and nephew of the Bishop, received them in the name of the Bishop, and accompanied by Mme. de Sconhel, who was the inspiration of the good work, conducted them to the Ladies' Hospitaliers, where they received a royal welcome.

The next day Reverend Father Sadry, S. J., and other ecclesiastics placed themselves at the disposal of the Sisters to visit the houses which the Bishop judged suitable for their establishment. Their choice fell on a house of the Ville-Neuve, at an angle of the streets called the Trois-Marteaux and Grand-Saint-Louis. The place was rather narrow, it is true, but the situation was beautiful, the air good and the water excellent. His Lordship had the purchase concluded and the appropriation arranged for the commencement of the work. The purchase price and the workmen were paid by the Bishop of La Rochelle, who also gave the sacred vessels for the new chapel.

Mother of the Ascension de la Valette

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST SISTERS — THEIR FIRST LABORS — CONFRATERNITY OF THE SACRED HEARTS

MOTHER M. of the Ascension de la Valette was the niece of Mother M. of the Trinity Heurtant. At the time of the foundation in Guingamp, the Ladies Kervegan and des Arcis, knowing the straitened position of their brother-in-law, proposed taking with them their little niece, promising to furnish her with an education and provide her with a dowry, if her vocation should call her to the religious state. Mlle. de la Valette went to Guingamp at the age of five or six years. Her amiable qualities of mind and body soon gained her all hearts. The pure beauty of her soul was reflected on her countenance; by her innocence and candor she was at that early age very pleasing to God.

Her biographer seizes hold of some instances that might be of interest regarding the boarding school of those days, in Our Lady of Charity. This young child, clothed in her little white habit and little white veil, was never so happy as when exercising herself in the virtues of the religious life. As she was a good reader she often read in the refectory for the Sisters. In the choir she made use of her fine strong voice in singing the High Masses; her zeal even went so far as to give lessons in reading to four of her little companions. Her aptitude for work, especially manual work, did not respond, however, to her other natural talents; this lack of activity caused this child numerous humiliations and severe reprimands. She submitted to those trials with a strength of character and of will totally different to the lachrymose sensibility of the children of our days. God, Himself, reproved her for the least faults. One day while playing an important role in a little drama she felt a natural sentiment of vanity while receiving the compliments of her mistresses and others for her deportment. Almost at once her face became quite disfigured by an ugly disfiguring moisture. The pious child looked upon this disfigurement as a chastisement, and by it understood that God claimed her whole heart, and at the moment she made the resolution to bid adieu to the world. After that she used to make a fifteen minute meditation, and gave an account like the novices. What fruits of virtue can thus be drawn from an education as pious as hers!

It is to be remarked that the most distinguished superiors have been so formed from their earliest years. We might mention in this respect Mothers M. of the Nativity Herson and Mother of the Infant Jesus de Bois-David, of Caen; Mothers de Murado Le Goff, Bossinot, Le Gentil, of Guingamp; Mother La Valette, of Vannes; Mother de Chansonville, of Paris, and several others. The tree is known by its fruit.

Mlle. de la Valette had the happiness of making her First Communion when she was nine years old. In an age so little advanced and so poorly developed as to resources all the truths of religion were perfectly known to her and her heart was well prepared to be united with her God. After that event she began to feel the calls of Divine grace and the insistent interior dawning of those sublime virtues for which she was remarkable. She felt, too, that she must give up the world and embrace the religious life. She was so accustomed to the usuages of this life, for it often happened, that with a charming grace of manner, beautifully simple in itself, she would warn the novices, and even the professed, of the failings she perceived in their conduct.

The companions of her novitiate render the most beautiful testimonials to the continual examples of fervor and regularity that she gave them—that is, after she had been received in 1686. The humor that disfigured her countenance, when she was younger, again reappeared. The superiors decided to send her to Vannes to be treated by a specialist, a man of great talent. The skill of the specialist temporarily cured her, but the disease again manifested itself after her return to Guingamp, so it appeared more prudent to send her away for a time. Hence, she made her profession in Vannes on November 3, 1689.

Being professed she showed her zeal in performing the least orders of her superiors. A slight criticism made before her made her look sad and serious and she was not afraid to correct the culprit by a gentle remonstrance. Notwithstanding her poor health she fulfilled nearly all the employments. As her age increased, the memory of her dear aunt—Mother

M. of the Trinity—became more enfeebled, so she was given her as aid in the choir, and this charge furnished her with occasions of multiplying her acts of virtue. The Mother Assistant reproached her for all the faults she committed in the choir at the Office, and told her that her self-love hindered her from foreseeing and warning the Sisters. The humble niece received all these reproaches, and her respect for her venerable aunt was not in the least diminished.

When she became too feeble to exercise her office Mother Heurtant obliged the Sisters to replace her. The Community then chose for Assistant Sister M. of the Ascension. By her attention to the smallest observances she kept up all practices.

Later, as Mistress of the Penitents, an ardent zeal made her impose cruel mortifications upon herself to obtain the conversion of those poor wandering sheep. She, herself, composed the exercises of a retreat, which she made them follow; the most obdurate were moved by her convincing eloquence in her conversations with them. For their instruction she explained religious pictures to them; this usuage was in ordinary use at that time, especially in Brittany.

Being named Directress of the Novices her principal aim was to give the young Sisters a high idea of the religious vocation, and of that of the Daughters of Our Lady of Charity in particular, who associate themselves with Jesus Christ in the great work of the salvation of souls. "A favor," she said, "which merits to be purchased with the price of our blood; since this gift is granted us without any merit on our part; what gratitude, then, do we not owe to God! It would be only a heart insensible to every duty that would not be touched by such predilection."

The languors of the religious life, that halting attitude of many in the spiritual life, and that hesitation in sacrificing little trifles, were insupportable to her. She often repeated: "We must not cheapen, nor be niggardly in, the gift we have made of ourselves to God, for if we hesitate we interfere in the designs of God upon us." Under her direction it was of obligation generously to combat repugnances to obedience, and if the novices showed any distaste for some certain work she made them break their will and render themselves pliable in her hands.

Sister M. of the Ascension extended her care even to exterior habits; she wished that they would acquire a certain polish of manner in keeping with their holy state: "For," she said, "a Religious of Our Lady of Charity should preach virtue in everything, even in her exterior. Nothing shows off to more advantage in a nun than a grave and modest appearance." Her conduct in this respect was a perfect model. It would have been difficult to find a person having a more religious demeanor.

This firmness did not tend to close the hearts of the novices to her scrutiny; they loved their wise and amiable mistress. She recalled to them one day that they must attach themselves to God alone.

In the midst of these holy occupations the ardent desire of laboring for the glory of God and the development of the Institute, conceived by Sister de la Valette, were not fully satisfied.

When the foundation of La Rochelle was proposed she did all she could by her prayers and personal efforts to make it succeed. As secretary of the Mother Superior she had many ways of working for that end. Final success was due partly to her perseverance. But without taking that into account she, herself, was designated to be the first stone of the foundation. However, she had to remember her vow of obedience, and bring her faith into account, in order to accept the superiority of the new house.

Sister M. of Jesus Pitouays, chosen as her Assistant, was a professed nun of the Monastery of Hennebont for some months, when the destruction of the convent took place. We find the name of several of her relations among the signers of the petition which the principal inhabitants addressed to the King to obtain the reestablishment of this house. Like the other Sisters, she joined those of Vannes, and the two Communities lived in perfect accord. Sister M. of Jesus soon proved that her progress in virtue was rapid; she made great strides in overcoming a too sensible feeling that superiors had their preferences for others to her detriment. Her soul became like a stalwart bulwark, which no wind of adversity could shake; abandonment to the Will of God kept her standing, when to all appearances she might have fallen a victim to her feelings. In Vannes she exercised nearly all the charges, with an ability and a zeal that were remarkable; in fact, so deeply concerned was she in the outcome of the proposed foundation that her superiors thought no one more capable of the office than Sister M. of Jesus. Hence, they proposed to send her to La Rochelle. Although she evinced a decided repugnance in changing her abode for the third time she overcame this, as well as the feeling that her delicate health made her think she was not fit for the extraordinary labors of a foundation.

Sister M. of Saint Anne Perret was left an orphan at an early age, and was reared by her eldest sister, and received through her instrumentality a pious education. She entered the Convent of Vannes at twenty-five, where her sister, Sister M. of the Holy Cross, had preceded her. She was entirely devoted to religion, and during her life willingly devoted herself to the hardest work. The services that she rendered at La Rochelle, though more obscure than the other two Sisters, were not less important. As this newly-founded house had no Lay-Sister she fulfilled all those functions with perfect humility and great economy.

To increase the merits of souls already so perfect God intended they should pass through the fire of tribulations, but at the same time He would bless the labors they had undertaken for the furtherance of His glory.

We might say that La Rochelle was founded in heaven previous to its foundation in this vale of tears. The Sisters were not yet dwelling in their house when they were saddened by the loss of one of the postulants, Mlle. Marchalle-Cottard.

This young lady had a great desire to see the enclosure established, in order to be able to enter the novitiate and consecrate herself to God, but the Lord hastened the execution of her aspirations. She was in ill health when she left Vannes; the change of air aggravated the disease of the lungs from which she suffered. The announcement of her approaching death caused deep regret. Father Sadry, who heard her confession, and the Abbe Redon, who visited her several times, could not help but admire her. She asked the favor of pronouncing her vows of religion, and had the happiness of receiving the Last Sacraments from the hands of the latter. She died piously on November 13, 1715.

The ceremony of establishment took place on the feast of the Presentation, at which Bishop de Champflour presided. After having celebrated Holy Mass, he received the renewal of vows of the Sisters. After Vespers in the evening the

Abbe Redon preached on the importance of the work that the Religious of Our Lady of Charity had come to found in La Rochelle, and his remarks on the sublimity of the fourth vow, which dealt with the laboring for the salvation of souls, even the most abandoned, was powerful and to the point. He also recalled the sacrifice the Sisters made in leaving their dear Monastery of Vannes, their second family and their country, to come to this distant town, wishing to become the spiritual mothers of numerous generations. The Bishop then gave Benediction, and presently entered the cloister to congratulate the nuns on their auspicious commencement. His Lordship extended the faculties of Father Sadry as confessor, and this good Father acquitted himself of this duty of charity until his death. The Bishop also invited the Abbe de Bastiere to come there every day to say Mass. To the spiritual benefits were joined the temporal blessings, for the prelate gave 4,000 francs for furniture for the house.

The first postulant from Vannes was admitted to the holy habit on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, and some time later the Sisters received the first postulant from the country. This young lady showed great firmness in resisting the solicitations of her mother, who went so far as to dare the Sisters to open their door to her daughter. They did not receive her after such a challenge, but the new postulant showed how courageous she was. She edified every one by her generosity. Finally, she received permission to follow her vocation.

From the day of the foundation Mother M. of the Ascension occupied herself with establishing a perfect regularity in the monastery, and sought out the means of laboring for the salvation of souls. On account of the limited condition of the house they were unable to receive Penitents so far. Her zeal suggested the thought of giving the chapel for retreats of persons outside who might wish to come there for that purpose. Bishop de Champflour approved of this idea, and he announced it through the town. They were very successful. No doubt the method was the same that Mother M. of the Ascension made use of in Vannes. A good missionary, who later died in Canada, gave the sermons. He had become a Sulpician. The superior, herself, gave the explanation of the *religious pictures*, and her instructions given under such an easy and familiar form attracted more attention than the sermons did, and seemingly produced better results. Several remarkable conversions were the result of those retreats. The Bishop of La Rochelle was so struck with the idea, that to render it more useful and give wider scope to the piety of the faithful, he wished to have it carried on in the center of the city, in the chapel of the Jesuit Fathers. This was better, as the place was more central. These pious exercises were given for five years in the monastery.

These labors were not adequate to the zeal of those Sisters; they must be up and doing what they had pledged themselves to on pronouncing their fourth vow. They respectfully and firmly represented this obligation to their good founder, and the Bishop bought, with considerable difficulty, a neighboring house, where, before the end of the year, it would be possible for them to take in some wandering sheep. The first attempts in this line hardly exercised the zeal and patience of the Sisters, but after waiting a short while others came that did; late-comers were well fitted to be classified as Penitents, but they had to be separated from the former, lest they should exercise a bad influence on them. The most incorrigible of these poor creatures were exasperated against the Sisters, even before their coming, and the calumnies that they so deftly spread through the city to the detriment of the house were a source of painful contradiction to the Sisters.

After these were put out of the house fervor reigned in the classes; the Community could do nothing with those wicked women; hence, to save others, they had to be expelled. The Penitents were sincere in their return to God and practiced heroic virtue: prayer was their port of happiness; their food was extremely poor, their bed hard, composed of a single paliasse, yet they did not excite the least complaint or murmur, so great was their mortification; their silence was so exact, that outside the hour of recreation one would not hear a word from morning until night.

One of them died soon after her entrance in sentiments of the utmost piety and repentance. She was of a good family; from her entrance in the Refuge her humility merited for her the Divine mercies. Consumption that undermined her bodily health did not consume her liberty of spirit, which she used to best advantage, often making acts of self-abandonment, contrition and love. She said to her mistress: "Mother, won't it be a lovely day when I shall be admitted to see my God! What graces has not Jesus Christ bestowed upon me! And it is to you, Mother, that I owe my salvation. Oh, how grateful I am to you, and how much will I not pray for you when I get to heaven, for I hope to go there through the mercy of my God!"

Just to hinder one mortal sin the Blessed Eudes accepted willingly all the afflictions, all the trials and all the ignominies he had to undergo in the foundation of the Order of Our Lady of Charity. How consoling such deaths to all his daughters, for they are of frequent occurrence in every house, and how happy they must feel to see their labors so crowned.

During her six years of superiority Mother M. of the Ascension administered the material concerns of the house with wonderful ability; she had the most indispensable constructions put up, and at the end of her government the works done in the other houses of the Institute were reproduced in that of La Rochelle. We find, in itemizing the labors done during those six years, the Penitents, the little boarding school and the adult or lady boarders. These three distinct categories existed until the Revolution.

Mme. de Sconhel, the chief instigator of this foundation, was the first to retire to the convent; but after some time, on account of some domestic influence, she left. It was an occasion of trouble to the new Community. Some strange rumors got afloat concerning it; and even the most right-minded people accused the Sisters of rank ingratitude. Providence took the part of the injured Sisters, and fully justified them, in a manner that was as severe as it was merciful. Mme. de Sconhel fell grievously ill, and in this state she saw herself abandoned and ill-treated by her own domestics. Then she opened her eyes, and recognized the falsity of the accusations they made against the Sisters. The Mother Superior sent a Touriere Sister to see her, whom she affectionately received; after some overtures she surmounted her false pride, and returned to the convent. Her death soon after her return was a pious one. She asked and obtained the favor of pronouncing the religious vows, under the name of Mary of the Heart of Jesus. Her will was made in favor of the Community, to whom she left a very important legacy.

We must not finish this chapter without speaking of the zeal of the Sisters in propagating the devotion to the Sacred Hearts. Bishop de Champflour granted them the erection of a Confraternity in their chapel, in accordance with the Bull of Clement X, accorded to the Seminary of the Eudists of Coutances in 1673. In the Act of the Bishop of La Rochelle, which we append, the reader will not fail to see the authorization given the clergy to recite the Offices of those feasts with their octaves. Evidently it means that it refers to the Offices composed by the Blessed Eudes:

Stephen, by the Providence of God and the authority of the Holy See, Bishop of La Rochelle, having seen the Bulls of Our Holy Father the Pope, Clement X, for the establishment of the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in the Church of the Seminary of Coutances, consecrated to their honor; the rules, Offices, prayers and meditations instituted in favor of the said Confraternity, with the approbations of their Lordships, the Bishops of Coutances, Vannes and Treguier; desirous, also, as much as it lies in our power, to inspire in all the faithful of our diocese the same devotion; we consent by these presents to the erection of a similar Confraternity in the church of our dear daughters, the Religious Ladies of Our Lady of Charity of this city; we give them power to aggregate and receive all those of either sex who shall ask to be associated and who shall have the requisite qualifications.

We permit all the priests and laity of our diocese to say the Offices, and keep the feasts with the octave of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, every day or any day that it is customary for said feasts to be celebrated; we approve, to this effect, the said Offices, prayers, meditations and rules of said Confraternity; we grant permission to have same printed and distributed in our diocese, and we exhort all the faithful to bring to said feasts the utmost piety and devotion.

Given in La Rochelle, January 4, 1716.

STEPHEN,
Bishop of La Rochelle.

The successors to this Bishop renewed the approbation. They have kept those of NN. SS. de Nenou, de Crussol d'Uzes, de Coucy.

The Confraternity established in a more central location, and likewise more Protestant than Catholic, did not develop into large dimensions; in the register of members are the names of several canons and other clergymen.

CHAPTER III

ALTERNATE SUPERIORITIES OF MOTHER M. OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT DE COMBLES, AND M. OF THE ASCENSION DE LA VALETTE — DEATH OF THESE TWO MOTHERS AND OF BISHOP DE CHAMPFLOUR

TO SUSTAIN the multiplied labors of this foundation Mother M. of the Ascension had, in 1718, obtained from the Monastery of Vannes three Sisters—M. of the Blessed Sacrament de Combles, M. of Saint Teresa Chapelle and M. Aimee of Jesus Perigaud. She was succeeded by the first of these Religious on May 21, 1722.

Like her two sisters Mother M. of the Blessed Sacrament had received her education in the Monastery of Vannes. At that time she was not considered, by any means, as a child of extraordinary intelligence; in fact, her mentality was rather low; she seemed disposed to loiter over her tasks, which exposed her to the raillery of her companions. However, by dint of constant application she strove to overcome her natural slowness, until she became anxious to outdo the others; she soon rivaled them in science and virtue.

When her education was finished her parents recalled her to take her place at their fireside, and they neglected nothing to inculcate in her a taste for the world and its pleasures. But God had spoken to her heart; she was faithful, as her elder sister had been, Sister M. of the Heart of Jesus. Her younger sister joined them later. She pronounced her vows on the feast of All Souls. She concluded from this that she had to die to herself and to the world, and this impression remained with her all her life.

She was very exact, prudent and amiable to every one in the different employments that were confided to her. Her aid in the dispensary rendered this testimonial to her virtues:

> With this dear Sister all the fatigues of this painful employment became easy to me, on account of her quiet kind manner of acting. Although very serious, she had the knack of making herself loved; she had to overcome herself in order

to do this; like Saint Paul, she made herself all to all. Her charity would often remember the needs of every one, and she suffered when she could not relieve the Sisters—that is, when it was impossible for her to get them what they needed. Her generosity was also extended to the Penitents. She endeavored to give to the mistresses all that was necessary for them. She would deprive herself of something in order to give it to others, and carried her mortification to its extreme limits. Her aid had to watch out to see if she was not in need; she always accepted what was given her, preferring to condescend to others than to mortify herself otherwise. She used the rights of the *first* Dispenser, so as to be free to take for herself what was most fatiguing and painful. She often did the work of the Lay-Sisters, especially that of the cook, giving an example of patience, equality of temper and sweetness in replying, when they could not satisfy those that required something impossible to give. Life was so easy with this dear Sister that it was impossible to have any difficulty with her; one could never know what uniformity of will and purpose she was endowed with, unless one were to live with her.

It was this Religious who was chosen in 1718 to aid the foundresses in La Rochelle. Without any effort on her own part every one esteemed her, and she was universally called the *saint.* She was always looked upon as the probable successor of Mother M. of the Ascension.

At the commencement of her superiority Mother M. of the Blessed Sacrament, drawn by her ardor for perfection, appeared for an instant to forget that all souls are not equally strong nor capable of a uniform direction; but she had the wisdom to take the advice that was given her; by doing so she rendered her government sweet, and gained the affection of the Sisters. It would be difficult to imitate her charity for them. Her historian did not fear to say: "It is not believed that this good Mother passed a single night without thinking of the needs of others; she was so quick to see and anxious to give to her Sisters all that they needed."

God tried her by great adversities: First came the death of Father Sadry, who since the foundation was confessor to the Sisters. His zeal and devotedness could not be measured. Before his death this Father gave the monastery a new token of his affection by praying the Reverend Father du Pla to direct the Sisters. Father du Pla promised, and his fidelity never diminished.

The death of Bishop de Champflour exposed the Community to disaster. This prelate did not obtain the letters patent of the King; the will he made in favor of the Sisters was contested; the Bishop left them the houses they had acquired at his expense, 30,000 francs for the board and maintenance of the Penitents, and ordered that the building commenced by his wish would be finished at the expense of his successor. This was a point difficult to obtain. The administrators of the hospital and the legatees refused to deliver the legacy unless the Sisters could show the letters patent, and did everything possible to hinder it. The Abbe Redon interposed in favor of Our Lady of Charity, as did the Cardinal de Bissy.

To regulate this grave and difficult affair, it was advisable to await the arrival of Bishop de Brancas of La Rochelle. This new Bishop entered into the views of his late predecessor, and obtained by his influence the indispensable letters patent, and all the authorizations necessary from the City and Parliament. Thus the Sisters were relieved of all anxiety on this score, and saw their foundation well assured. They do not enjoy today the goods bestowed upon them by Bishop de Champflour, but they faithfully keep in remembrance his many benefits, and every year they have a service in their church for the repose of his soul. It is in this way that the Monastery of La Rochelle faithfully carries out the law on the virtue of gratitude laid down by the Blessed founder.

Mother M. of the Ascension was reelected in 1725, when the *Te Deum* was joyously sung by the Sisters for the letters patent.

The Community slowly developed; it was then composed of thirteen Religious and sixty other persons—Penitents or boarders. The labor was too much for the Sisters, and to increase their affliction, in 1727, nearly all became dangerously ill. During those trials Bishop de Brancas showed his fatherly interest in them; often visited the convent and helped in many ways concerning the temporals.

Among the boarders was a child of eight years of age, who had been sent with a letter bearing the King's private seal. Born of Catholic parents, the child was placed, after their death, under the tutelage of Protestant kindred who brought her up in their errors. The government of Louis XV had the good fortune, although negligent in other things, not to permit the child to remain with them. A Protestant preacher added fuel to the flames by denying intolerance. The bad faith of those heretics was evident, and the poor child was monopolized by them, contrary to all rights. This little lady, although kept for a time under their evil influence, became and remained ever after a fervent Catholic.

The Monastery of La Rochelle gave its full adhesion to the Assembly of 1734. Mother de la Valette went there in the capacity of superioress, but owing to illness she was not able to assist at the sessions, and had to return in all haste to La Rochelle. Before her departure she stated that herself and Community ratified all that would be regulated at the Assembly.

Since the death of a postulant who had come there the Sisters had not paid tribute to that fell messenger. In those years, 1735 and 1736, painful sacrifices were demanded of them.

The first victim was Sister M. of the Trinity Cottard. She had been brought up with her three sisters in the Monastery of Vannes, and while still very young she expressed a great desire to consecrate herself to God in the Institute, but the confused condition of family affairs retarded her admission for a long time. Her parents did all they could to induce her to enter another monastery, but she only replied, that if she would be assured of living many years in another convent and only two in that of Our Lady of Charity she would prefer it to all others, because it had only for its end the salvation of souls. For a long time she made it her happiness to converse on the sublimity of this vocation with one of her companions who had the same holy aspirations.

One day this young friend told her in secret that her entrance into the novitiate had been delayed, but that she only deferred it for some days until some little affairs were settled. Mlle. Cottard quickly replied: "What! is it possible that you would delay even one single day! Ah, if I had the same liberty of action that you have, wouldn't I fly there." Her friend having responded that she did not look upon this slight delay as failing in her vocation, since she would go there a little later, Mlle. Cottard said: "It is always a mark of indifference if we put of till tomorrow what we can do for God today."

At the time of the foundation in La Rochelle, the obstacles to her holy desires disappeared all at once. In the liberty that was granted her Mlle. Cottard saw a manifestation of the Divine Will, and left with her sisters for that house. The death of her young sister before the installation, and the departure of her elder sister to join the Benedictines, did not shake her vocation. It is easy to fancy with what fervor she began her novitiate. Mother de la Valette did not spare her; she applied herself to correct a certain easy-going way that the young novice had inherited as a natural legacy. After some corrections she became strong and active in all kinds of labor. However, her expertness cost her many humiliations.

On the eve of finishing her novitiate Sister M. of the Trinity performed an act of heroic abnegation. A boarder sent a letter outside without the knowledge of anyone, in which she severely blamed the conduct of superiors towards the novices. As Sister Cottard wrote well and easily, this criticism was imputed to her, and she was bitterly reproved. Imitating the silence of our Lord in His Passion, she was ready to recommence her novitiate as a penance for her pretended fault. For two years the odium of this accusation was attached to her, and she never made a single complaint. God took care to justify her before her profession. Admiration then took the place of diffidence.

After her profession she was charged with the responsibility of the boarding school; her talents made her admirably fitted for this employment, but as she showed a want of ability in maintaining discipline Mother de la Valette thought it well to replace her. Her self-love naturally suffered from this humiliation, but her temper was quite unruffled, as we see by a letter she wrote about that time to her friend in Vannes: "Nothing can equal the graces that God has showered upon me; there is nothing hard in the service of this Good Master. I find that every day I become more attached to Him."

When Sister M. of the Trinity took charge of the Penitents, her health was very far from being robust; her zeal in this employment consumed her gradually; her strength failed in the work of the sanctification of others. The Community saw with sorrow how useless were the remedies that were given her, and expected to make the sacrifice of parting. It was a great sacrifice, indeed, for the enfeeblement of the two venerated Mothers M. of the Ascension and M. of the Blessed Sacrament made the Community foresee that their life work was nearly accomplished, and they were looking forward to Sister M. of the Trinity as their successor. As to this dear

Sister, her fear of death disappeared before so imminent a danger. With great presence of mind she wrote out all that concerned her works for her aide, and began to prepare herself to meet her God. She died a holy death on October 15, 1735, being thirty-eight years old.

Less than a month after Mother M. of the Blessed Sacrament followed her. She was already sick when Mother M. of the Ascension was taken ill in Caen, and this unexpected attack caused her much alarm. She lost her sleep and appetite, which hastened the end very materially. However, her courage kept her up a year longer, but she was always occupied with the thought of death; she did all her actions with a view to that supreme passage. A malignant fever, but without any apparent degree of gravity, attacked her during the first days of November, and snatched her from the affection of all her Sisters on the 19th, before they had the slightest suspicion of her danger. She was fifty-eight years old, and had been thirty-five years professed.

These deaths were a deep grief to Mother M. of the Ascension; her health was so precarious that the Father Superior forbade her to assist Mother de Combles in her last moments, although the dying nun had asked for her. These two souls, so tenderly united in God, had to make this last sacrifice imposed upon them by obedience.

The weakening of her physical forces did not permit this respected Mother to support her pains with the same energy as heretofore, and she never recovered. During the space of six months it was impossible for her to be put to bed; the doctor voiced his astonishment at seeing day by day a body so spent as hers had become, wondering, as he said, how it could have life in it. In the midst of the greatest sufferings Mother de la Valette never complained; she blessed God, saying: "The hand of our Lord ought to appear more amiable to us when He chastises than when He caresses; His strokes, hard as they may appear, are always the work of His mercy."

The presence of mind, which remained during her last moments, and the thought of death, which she seemed never to lose sight of, were combining forces in that great moment; she remembered her duties to her Sisters, being still their superioress, and she would not turn away her thoughts from that God Who was calling her to Himself. Three days before she expired she took the accounts from the Sister Econome. The Community gathered together in her room the last day of her life, and wishing to give them her parting advice, she said:

> You behold me, my dear Sisters, between life and death. Guard, I beseech you, that peace and union among yourselves that God so loves; be kind and charitable to each other. Be watchful that jealousy does not creep in among you, as it sometimes glides into Communities. Never speak when you feel any antipathy to another Sister, until you have overcome it; it is a pest that destroys religion. Pay great respect to your superiors, and be obedient to their orders; have this respect and affection also for the older Sisters; remember the services they have rendered the house. Have no communication with seculars, and give them no confidences; if you do otherwise you destroy the reputation of the house. I indeed, have scruples for having paid altogether too much attention to each particular Sister in the distribution of the charges. It was on account of the affection that I have for you all that makes me mention this. Pray for me when I am in my agony, and for the repose of my soul after my death.

She died as she lived, serenely calm in the knowledge of the many good works that she performed and the many virtues she so courageously practiced, yet with a lowly estimate of herself as became the spouse of a Crucified Jesus, on July 13, 1736. She founded the monastery and had governed it fifteen years. Her remains were laid to rest in the choir of the Religious, in order that they might always remember her affection and her good example.

CHAPTER IV

SUPERIORITIES OF MOTHERS M. OF THE ASSUMPTION DU BOUETIER DE KERORGUEN AND OF M. OF SAINT ALEXIS BON—1736 TO 1749

M. REDON, the superior of the Community was absent at the time of the death of the worthy Mother, M. of the Ascension, but before undertaking his journey he had deputed the government of the house to Sister M. of Jesus Pitouyais, until his return. This was a hard obedience to that humble Religious, and she strove to hasten the regular election. This took place in the month of November, 1736, and Sister M. of the Assumption du Bouetier de Kerorguen was elected.

The new superior was from Hennebont. She was educated in the Academy of the Ursulines of Malestroit; she there developed a religious vocation, and thought of joining them, but an interior voice, strong and persuasive, spoke to her heart, saying to her as it had formerly spoken to Abraham: "Leave thy country and go to the land that I shall show thee." Being quite undecided, she went to the Monastery of Vannes, where she had several relatives Religious, and she entered there as a boarder. Her two aunts and her two sisters begged her to give herself to God when the foundation of La Rochelle would be founded. Her decision was taken; she felt it was God's Will to go far from her family and her country, and she joined the second band of Sisters.

This first act of generosity was followed by many others; we might say her life was replete with them. She had a choleric temperament, which did not take readily to virtue, especially to the virtue of amiability, without and under great constraint. She had to be deceptive, and instead of being dry and cold in demeanor, as was natural to her, as well as a little unsociable by inclination, she was to be seen in the recreations gay and full of life.

Charmed by her progress and her acquired virtues, Mother M. of the Ascension made her her right hand, and feared not to name her Mistress of the Penitents when she was twenty-one years old. This able superior was not deceived in her discernment, and the young Sister comported herself in this employment with so much zeal and moderation that she at once gained the confidence of those girls, and they feared and respected her under every circumstance.

She fulfilled with no less zeal and devotedness the charges of portress, Mistress of the Boarders, econome and Directress of the Novitiate. Her talent was more particularly shown in the ability with which she portioned out the trials to find out the strength of her novices. Broad-minded and liberal, she knew how to render the religious life amiable, even when it was rigorous, and made them taste how sweet and light was the yoke of the Lord; yet, she exacted great fidelity to the observances.

Sister M. of the Assumption exercised this charge at the time of her election. It was a difficult task to govern the house after the venerable Mother who had governed it from its beginning; the youth of the new superior, who was only thirty-four years old, made her position still more painful. At the beginning the burden seemed to be above her strength, but submission to the Divine Will repressed her sorrow. God alone knew and saw her tears; and it was always the same on every painful occasion. It was sufficient for her to know that God willed it or permitted it for her to pronounce her fiat. Those who were the occasion of such trials immediately became the object of her kindness, and they received from her inexhaustible charity a thousand testimonies of her affection.

Under her administration, and thanks in a great measure to her ability, the revenues of the Community increased; several buildings were erected, and the enclosure was enlarged, besides the purchase of three small houses and lots. Twice by the imprudence of novices and three times by the wickedness of Penitents who tried to run away the monastery was in the greatest danger of being destroyed by fire, but in every case, by some manifested circumstance, truly providential, it escaped all danger.

Mother M. of the Assumption was a very faithful observer of the Rule, and she solicited M. Redon to approve the Constitutions that had been revised by the Assembly of 1734. This ecclesiastic, who was superior of the monastery, granted her request in these eulogistic terms, which go to prove the good that had been already accomplished:

> The glory of God and the sanctification of souls is the general end that all Religious propose to themselves; but besides this end, so necessary for their salvation, the Religious of Our Lady of Charity have a special object, according to which they employ themselves in the instruction and salvation of girls and women who are desirous of returning to God by renouncing the disorderly life they were living.
>
> There is nothing more praiseworthy or more necessary in the age of corruption in which we live, and nothing more edifying than the conduct of these Religious in the practice of this important work. Faithful in following the Rules laid down for them by their pious founder, and under the authority of the Bishops who have approved them, we are witness of the edification with which they conduct themselves, and of the good they have operated in this city of La Rochelle, since the late Bishop de Champflour, Bishop of this diocese, executed the design he had formed of establishing in this city a house of this Congregation. As I have been for some time charged with the guidance of this Community I am able to say that we can thank and praise the Lord for the graces and blessings that He has bestowed upon them, and for the conversions they have so nobly contributed to. . . .

The remainder of this long document is the ordinary formula of approbation. In a city mostly composed of Protestants, vocations were very rare and, on the contrary, persons in need of conversion were numerous. The health of the Sisters, naturally far from robust, soon gave way, and sickness was frequent. This was the trouble with Mother du Bouetier; besides her own charge she kept the work of the econome; very often she was compelled to replace those who were sick, and do their work. Thus had she numberless ways of proving her charity.

She had the sorrow of closing the eyes in death of one of the Sister Foundresses, Sister M. of Saint Anne Perret, in the year 1740. God treated her as He does His saints, and recompensed her devotion by a kind of leprosy, which caused her much suffering—greater still, as she was charged with the guidance of the house.

After she was cured of this disease she kept as a remnant other infirmities, which made the doctor think that the air of La Rochelle did not agree with her constitution. The Sisters of Vannes having learned this, proposed with much eagerness that she return to the house of her profession. Her spirit of utter abandonment to the Will of God made Sister Perret refuse, and she replied that she looked upon the place she was living in as her Calvary, and that she wished to die there.

God was satisfied with her goodwill, and restored her to health. She employed herself with renewed zeal in procuring the salvation of souls. Until her death, Sister M. of Saint Anne was the consolation of her superiors and the edification of the Community by her humble submission and profound respect for authority. Her simple gaiety and her spiritual answers were the joy of the recreations. The sufferings of her last illness and the approach of death did not rob her of her calmness and resignation to the Divine Will. She died on June 21, 1740, aged seventy-two years; she was forty-five years professed.

Fifteen days after, on July 4th, the last of the Sisters of the foundation, Sister M. of Jesus Pitouyais, went to her reward. She governed the house many years as Assistant, during the long illnesses of the Mothers and during the vacancies, although she was never superioress. If she had never been elected it was on account of her deafness. Her biographer said that this infirmity was attributed to a special permission of God, Who had heard and answered her prayers that she might never be burdened with any very responsible charge.

As Mistress of the Penitents and Directress of the Novices she rendered innumerable services to the monastery. Her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament made her beloved and esteemed by every one; she never felt so happy as when employed as sacristan. In her last illness, in order to overcome a drowsiness that troubled her greatly, her nurse need only speak a word to her about the ornaments of the altar and she would be immediately awake and ready to do her share in talking about what caused her as much love as pleasure. At the time of her death she was professed fifty-three years.

Mother M. of the Assumption was deposed in 1743. On account of her poor health she was not reelected; she was more or less an invalid after her return to the common life. Mother M. of the Ascension de la Valette, who knew her so well, made this eulogy of her one day: "She is a truly interior soul." Many incidents proved the truth of this judgment. One day a Sister complained in her presence of the distractions that her employment gave her. Sister M. of the Assumption showed her surprise at this remark; her astonishment proved that she was never subjected to such human weakness. She even acknowledged that by the Divine mercy she was never distracted, even in the midst of the greatest embarrassment, simply because she did what she was doing for God and only to please Him; she never gave herself up entirely to any business, and that this conduct, far from spoiling what she was engaged in, only served to assure the greatest success. She often experienced this.

Her union with God rendered her preparation for death very easy. She slept sweetly in the Lord on February 6, 1753, being only fifty-one years old. She went to heaven in time to celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Mother M. of Saint Alexis Bon succeeded her as superioress. This Sister was the daughter of a worthy merchant of La Rochelle. Called at an early age to the religious life she could not respond to that call until her twenty-seventh year, as she had to help her father in his business. When her vocation became more certain she made her father acquainted with her design; he immediately acquiesced, notwithstanding the need he had of her services; she then fulfilled her life-long desire. He brought her, himself, to the Carmelites of Saintes, where her love for austerities decided her to enter.

She had scarcely entered when an inconceivable weariness took possession of her. Her efforts to overcome the feeling of lassitude were vain, the good Carmelites were powerless to help her; after some months of suffering she decided to leave. Later on this extraordinary state was attributed to the prayers of Sister M. of Saint Joseph Geoffroy, who wanted her to be a Religious of Our Lady of Charity. When she went to the Carmelites this Sister said to her: "Go, Mademoiselle. I shall pray for you, but I assure you that you shall never be a Religious there."

Shortly after her return to La Rochelle she asked admission to the monastery, and persevered there, notwithstanding the many trials that Mother M. of the Ascension subjected her to, fearing that her nature was inconsistent. The fervor of her first days continued all during her novitiate; her aptitude for affairs and her prudence in treating with every one placed her at the head of the Community later on. The years of her government passed by peacefully, and she certainly would have been reelected at different times had she not, like Mother du Bouetier, fallen into a state of permanent infirmity. For several years she had more than one trait of resemblance to the holy man Job, and her patience approached in a measure to that of the patriarch. God did this to complete her perfection; without doubt He wished to render her a participant in the glory of the Angels, for He called her to Himself on the feast of Saint Michael, 1760.

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CHAPTER V

SUPERIORITY OF MOTHER M. OF SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA VALETTE AND MOTHER M. OF SAINT STANISLAS COTTARD

MOTHER M. of Saint John Baptist was a niece of Mother M. of the Ascension de la Valette and grandniece of Mother of the Trinity Heurtant. Having lost her own mother when she was very young she was brought up in the Monastery of Vannes by her aunts, and drew from those pure sources the primitive spirit of the Order. After she returned home her father placed her with her grandmother, for whom she kept house, and served to sweeten her declining years. She remained in the world until her twenty-seventh year, doing all sorts of good and occupying herself mainly with the cares that filial piety demanded of her in caring for her worthy grandmother. When she had the sorrow of losing her, Mother M. of the Ascension proposed to her, in order to divert her from grieving over her loss, to pass some time in the Monastery of La Rochelle. Having accepted the proposition she was received there as a boarder.

The charity with which the Sisters treated her, and her conversations with her pious aunt, begot the germ of a religious vocation for which her solid virtue had admirably fitted her. The news of her entrance in the novitiate was greeted with rapture by the Community; the Sisters were well aware of her great qualities. Bishop de Brancas, himself, performed the ceremony of investiture.

After her profession the maturity of her judgment, the prudence with which she was gifted, and especially her solid virtue, induced her superiors to confide to her, successively, the most important charges of the house; she was named portress, Mistress of the Penitents, Mistress of the Boarders and econome at different times. On many occasions this last employment was for her the subject of great sacrifices. Her natural kindness of heart impelled her to satisfy every one, and when this was impossible her affliction was sad to behold, The death of her beloved aunt caused her much affliction; she lost her guide, this was an extreme loss for her generous heart, and soon after she perceived that the day was not far distant when she would be called upon to replace her, as the Community chose her for Assistant. She exercised much zeal in this office, in what regarded the Divine Office especially.

Finally, on the Ascension, 1749, the Sisters elected her superioress. During her first two triennials she generously employed her personal fortune in building an infirmary, a bake-house and a laundry. Her government was sweet and gracious; she gained the hearts of the Sisters without exception; as often as the Rule allowed she was placed at the head of the Community.

At her first deposition the Community was composed of twenty-eight professed of the choir, five novices, one postulant and seven Lay-Sisters. They had forty Penitents. There is no indication of the exact number of boarders, large and small; possibly about the same number. Under the administration of Mother Cottard the Religious increased in numbers; the classes did not increase any. The history of the second term of this good Mother, from 1761 to 1767, shows that the Penitents diminished in numbers. The death of Father de Labbadie, confessor of the Community, deprived the Religious of an excellent director. This holy priest had exercised this charge for thirty years, and for a long time could not be replaced. The dearth of priests was very great in La Rochelle, especially since the expulsion of the Jesuits. The Penitents, who had a great need of proper direction, were often many months without being able to approach the Sacraments. It was even nearly impossible to find a confessor to enable them to fulfill their Easter duty.

In 1773 Mother M. of Saint John Baptist was reelected for the fifth time. The Community, seeing her green old age, hoped to possess her for a long time, and especially at the head; but God had disposed otherwise. Sickness came all too quickly to break down her health; the energy of her wonderfully retentive memory continued as formerly, but her strength of body diminished rapidly. At the end of the year 1775 the Sisters could no longer delude themselves, for they saw that death was approaching, that she was within hailing distance of eternity; she put all her affairs in order and asked for the

Last Sacraments. She lived until January 25, 1776, when, full of merits, she rendered her beautiful soul to God, at the age of seventy-seven years; she had spent forty-nine years in the religious life.

Mother M. of Saint Stanislas, who succeeded her, had governed the Community twelve years previously. We shall go back to those years. This remarkable superioress was born at Belle-Isle, and a sister of Mother M. of the Trinity Cottard, whose exquisite life we have read. It was to this sister that she owed her entrance in La Rochelle. After remaining there some time as a boarder she manifested her desire of becoming a Religious. Her mother, although a very good Christian, was imbued with those false principles which try to make vocations something that must be well proved. She obliged her to return to Brittany, in order to find out if her vocation was a solid one. It is probable that on the least weakening on the part of her daughter she would have ended by settling her in the world. Today, as then, doubtless there are young persons who are drawn to God to consecrate themselves to His service; they do not fear for those who regret their calling, or for those whose sordid motives are more or less imaginary; they follow the call with gaiety of heart, and do not hesitate to take their engagements upon themselves. On the other hand, how many are held back by fear of what may be before them! Others, to satisfy worldly-minded relations, take other engagements upon themselves, and are cruelly deceived. How many souls are in this way doomed to degradation! How many vocations lost!

Be that as it may, Mlle. Cottard proved to her mother that her resolution was not a thing of yesterday, but something that had been warmed and fed in the love and by the love of Jesus, so she shortly after received permission to enter the novitiate. When she took the habit she received the name of Mary of Saint Stanislas, and her constant study throughout her novitiate and her religious life was to follow in the footsteps of her amiable patron and model. Being professed, she was made to bring her talents and natural aptitude to the front, and succeeded well in the different employments confided to her; the success attending all her labors was due in great measure to her talent and perfect regularity. After the first deposition of Mother M. of Saint John Baptist de la

Valette she was elected to succeed her, and these two Mothers governed successively from 1749 to 1781.

During her first term Mother M. of Saint Stanislas busied herself with ornamenting and beautifying the church and the Sisters' choir. The holy relics were the object of her devotion; those that the monastery possessed were placed in splendid reliquaries. The exterior buildings were in process of decay; danger of the crumbling to pieces of some of them was imminent; she had them repaired in the midst of difficulties that seemingly were insurmountable.

The great trial of her government was the war between France and England, which strove very hard to conquer La Rochelle. A naval battle was fought, and the English disembarked in the month of September, 1757, some leagues from the city, in the camp de Fouras, whilst their man-of-war hovered in sight. Terror was extreme, many inhabitants sought refuge elsewhere. In the midst of these alarms, the situation of the poor Sisters was very sad and the embarrassment of the Mother Superior very great. The echoes of their plaints have come down to us through the ages in the letters to the first monastery, from which they asked counsel and guidance. The prospect of falling into the hands of Protestants and of being exposed to their outrages was the cause of their terror. The Sisters of Caen replied with great charity, and offered them hospitality if they would be obliged to quit their convent. Another letter written to Caen shows the most lively gratitude for this generous offer, and relates at the same time their happy deliverance from the enemy.

In effect, the English were skilfully deceived by M. de Rouffiac. This commander of the place ordered to file before their eyes two or three hundred young gentlemen and countrymen, in splendid uniforms. The English thought La Rochelle was full of troops, and this at a moment when their troops were very nearly disorganized; so dared not risk commencing a siege. After having entirely devastated the country and the surrounding places, especially the Isle of Re, they profaned the churches, then reembarked with their troops and fled away over the waters.

The spirit of the Gaul was ready to burst from the body politic, and sing songs of gratitude for so easy a victory. A serio-comic poem was composed for the occasion—in fact, not only one poem, but so inflated was the success that fully twenty-four were composed.

Sometime before the end of the first superiority of Mother M. of Saint John Baptist, the departure of several postulants and novices made quite a commotion in the city, and several families were very dissatisfied. A vacancy was also made in the apartments occupied by the lady boarders. However, the entrance of some noble ladies contributed to repeople those apartments. They were often a source of trouble to the Sisters, as they insisted upon having their own waiting maids.

Up to that time the Community had lost seven Religious of the choir since the foundation. In 1760 death snatched from their affection two good Lay-Sisters.

The two triennials of Mother M. of Saint John Baptist were also marked by a series of interior and exterior occurrences that were quite extraordinary. In 1767 the whole Community was attacked with a sort of cold which was so violent that they were obliged to say the Office of the Holy Heart of Mary in psalmody. During that same year Bishop Menou died, at the advanced age of eighty-seven years. This prelate was always a friend of the Community. His request was that his funeral should be conducted very simply. The affection and gratitude of the city willed it otherwise, as he had bestowed many and singularly fine benefits upon it.

Death visited the boarders' apartment, as well as the class of Penitents; it claimed a good old lady and a Penitent who had been in the house for thirty years; it gathered from the garden the sweetest little plant that grew there, an amiable child of eight summers.

That same year Divine Justice held the sword of fate hanging over France without being able to make that country see the errors of her way. La Rochelle bore a good part of the scourge. Famine stalked around regardless of its victims. The rigorous winter that followed made men quail with awe before the Hand of God—of a justly offended God. The very animals became ferocious, and leagued themselves together in a way to add to those evils: in one day a wolf, enraged with hunger, killed twenty-five persons and a number of animals. Its fury seemed to carry all before it; it broke even into houses, and dragged one poor woman from her bed. The victims of this vicious animal died in the hospital, surrounded by the charitable care of the worthy daughters of the Blessed Montfort.

The Sisters, although preserved from voracious beasts, were not excepted from the famine nor any other scourge, which seemed to be as strange as were those of Egypt, and which lasted nearly three months. This scourge or plague was caused by a prodigious quantity of caterpillars that infected all the houses and notwithstanding all precautions got mixed up with the food. This sorrowful year did not end without bringing new trials to the Sisters. On the eve of All-Saints, by the inadvertence of one of the domestics at work in the kitchen, poisoning of the whole household was caused by verdigris.

Every one paid tribute to her negligence, but God was satisfied with taking a toll of only one victim, Sister M. of Jesus-Dying Le Grand, whose great age took advantage of the poison; she was unable to resist or throw off the terrible illness. A circular attributed this favor to the prayers of the Mother Superior, who never ceased praying to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Very ill herself, the poor Superior was not able to do everything, and so had to bear the reproaches of the parents and relations of the boarders.

It was the new Bishop of La Rochelle, Monsignor de Crussol d'Uzes, who presided at the reelection of Mother Cottard in 1770. This prelate, doubtless wishing to give greater honor to the occasion as well as to the Sisters, brought with him several ecclesiastics as witnesses, but it was more a grief than an honor to the good nuns, as it was a violation of their Constitutions. Soon after he nominated as their Superior Father de Mausac, instead of Father de Menou, a relative of Bishop de Menou. This worthy priest retired to Paris, but always kept up a correspondence with the monastery, in which he continued to interest himself. At his death he bequeathed them a chalice estimated at 1,000 francs; the Sisters valued it highly as it had belonged to Bishop de Menou.

Before her deposition Mother M. of Saint Stanislas had the consolation of receiving four young Sisters to profession, but she had not one to replace them in the novitiate.

In 1773 the Community was composed of thirty-six Religious of the choir, one novice who had worn the habit for twenty-six years, but whose family affairs hindered her from making her profession, and six Lay-Sisters. They had thirty-seven Penitents—as many as they were able to accommodate. The Sisters did not complain of the little fruit of their labors. They had about thirteen lady boarders and eighteen little ones.

At her reelection in 1776, after the death of Mother de la Valette, Mother M. of Saint Stanislas had the joy of receiving several postulants whose vocation seemed quite solid; she received them to the habit after a short time, so as to replace several Sisters whose deaths had created a sad vacancy. Several other deaths took place later, and her own death occurred January 17, 1781. She had borne the yoke of the Lord during fifty-three years, and was seventy-four years of age. She was replaced by Mother M. of Saint Andrew Valleau.

CHAPTER VI

SUPERIORITY OF MOTHER M. OF SAINT ANDREW VALLEAU AND MOTHER M. OF SAINT VICTORIA CHANTREAUX—EXPULSION OF THE SISTERS FROM THEIR MONASTERY—THEIR SUFFERINGS

MOTHER VALLEAU was the eldest of four children that had been given their pious parents as a recompense for their virtue. Her father was a doctor in the Isle of Re, and was ever the friend of the poor and sick; the latter he relieved regardless of time or money; his skill was at the service of all. This great charity proved that he was gifted with a lively faith; he was careful to give to his young family that Christian education which was and is so necessary for children in all walks of life. It was to finish her education that Mother M. of Saint Andrew was sent to an Academy kept by some pious ladies in La Rochelle. The little boarder was quite near the monastery—so near, indeed, that the pupils and their mistresses used to come to the convent chapel to perform their devotions.

Mlle. Valleau found in those visits to our Hidden Savior the germ of her vocation. The singing of the Offices charmed her, and instilled into her young and keenly susceptible heart a great esteem for the religious life. Having returned to her family, after her education had been finished, she persevered in her pious exercises, notwithstanding the many social calls she was obliged to make, and the many worldly-minded companions she had to meet. Society and the joys of family life had lost their charms. Her mother saw with evident pleasure the turn her daughter's affection had taken, and rejoiced in the knowledge that she was progressing so rapidly in virtue.

She made known to her parents her design of being a Religious. Instead of preventing her, as many other parents do, they sought the best means of helping her to fulfill her design, grateful and happy to give to the Lord the firstling of their flock. Doctor Valleau, himself, brought his daughter to the convent. Her noviceship was confided to Sister M. of Saint

Alexis Bon, who zealously tested the vocation of the young postulant by the hardest practices as well as the most humiliating. But the pious neophyte courageously bore the conflict, was admitted to the holy habit and later on to her profession. Transported with joy after making her vows, she cried out with love, like her holy patron: "O good cross of holy religion, how much have I longed for thee; how ardently have I loved thee? I shall attach myself to thee with joyful confidence; I shall walk under my precious burden the rugged road to Calvary, with Him Who shed His precious Blood for me; then, like Him and for Him, I shall expire with love in your blessed arms!" That her vows were irrevocable was her happiest thought, and she often cried out: "It is done; never, never shall I be separated from my God!"

It was in these holy dispositions that the new professed nun took in hand the reformation of her entire life. Timidity of character arose as an obstacle between her and the work of her vocation. Obedience and the desire of making herself useful gave her strength to overcome it, and she succeeded so well that she successfully fulfilled the most important employments of the convent. She had charge of the novitiate at the time of her election in 1781.

The profound humility that marked her conduct could not fail to draw down celestial benedictions on her government. She guided her Sisters with that meekness that recalled the meekness of the Good Shepherd. She preached more by example than by words. Through a spirit of love and faith she vanquished her natural timidity so as to consecrate her beautiful voice to the singing of the Divine Office. To satisfy the piety of the infirm Sisters she built a tribune above the choir of the Penitents. This was quite an ornament to the chapel.

At her deposition in 1787 she prayed Mother M. of Saint Victoria to permit her to employ the remainder of her strength to the work of the fourth vow. In this regard she faithfully imitated the superiors who had preceded her, and in La Rochelle it was a kind of tradition that the deposed Sisters became Mistresses of the Penitents. The trials incident to this employment were at that time very severe; the near approach of the Revolution made the management of those wilful girls almost unbearable; they did not wish to be converted. Sister M. of Saint Andrew devoted herself with an indefatigable zeal and charity to this thankless task to the end of her life. When anyone mentioned the difficulties to her she simply replied: "I only meet, it is true, on every side of my thorny way, sufferings and contradictions, but I am not frightened; it is my path to Glory—my road to Calvary and up this steep way I shall walk, God willing, until I can lay my burden beneath His feet, and I shall say to Him every time, when trouble comes my way: 'O good Cross; how much have I desired thee!' "

Her good constitution and seemingly rugged health made the Community hope that she would live yet many years, when shortly after Easter, 1790, she was attacked with a violent pain in her side, just at the moment of Communion. The suddenness of the attack left little hope, and she met death in the most beautiful dispositions, in her sixty-fifth year, and in the fortieth of her religious life.

Mother M. of Saint Victoria Chantreaux succeeded her in 1787. It was this good Mother whom God had destined to guide the Sisters through the rombats and mighty perils of the Revolution. Does not her name show that she was predestined to be victorious and indicate triumph!

Nothing worth while had been recorded concerning the first five years of her superiority. When, in 1792, the revolutionary wind became alarmingly violent and threatening, and vengeance was whispered against priests and Religious Communities, Mother M. of Saint Victoria sought an asylum for the Sisters. The boarders and Penitents had already been dismissed with the exception of two boarders, who opened two houses in their own name, and there received the Religious, and gave them all the care they needed. The objects that the Republican rapacity would tear away from them were confided to different persons, who unfortunately were not faithful to their trust. Later on those unworthy creatures wanted to make the Sisters swear that they took nothing away with them but what belonged to them. She who related this fact adds: "I unhesitatingly answered, without any scruple, that it was so; very certain that we were the robbed ones and not the robbers. It was in vain that they tried to make it a matter of conscience. It was difficult to know who was in the wrong."

At length the decree of expulsion was made known to the Mother Superior on September 27, 1792; she communicated it to her weeping daughters, saying to them: "It has been decreed that in three days the house must be vacated." And so it was done.

The poor victims dispersed to the houses of friends in the city. It was with great difficulty that they were able to obtain religious aid. However, they secured a priest to whom they confessed, and who said Mass for them at intervals, in the house where Mother Chantreux resided. In order not to excite suspicion they went there two or three at a time. One evening, the Abbe Mercier being in the house, the Sisters were charitably warned that a search was to be made there that night. The courageous clergyman had every chance to escape; but it was impossible for him to carry away the Holy Reserve, which had remained two months enclosed in a cupboard.

This dispersion, painful though it was, offered them at least one consolation, that of receiving the counsels and direction of their superioress. They were deprived of this consolation in six months' time. The presence of these poor women was a danger to the Republic, and, in its name, it was signified to all those who were not born in La Rochelle, or in America, that they had to be outside the walls of the city within forty-eight hours.

This cruel decision renewed the suffering of the poor victims. Until then they were able to see each other from time to time, and give and take consolation from their superior, and, thanks to the devotedness of the Abbe Mercier, were able to receive the Sacraments at least sometimes. Their fears rose mountains high. What would become of them? What was looming up in that untraveled future? Could they not receive the Sacraments once more before leaving? The evening was already deepening into twilight when the Abbe Mercier invited them to go to some house where charitable people would give them shelter. In a short time this house sheltered nearly all the expelled Religious of the town belonging to the different Orders, and Father Mercier, seeing their number, got another priest to help him hear confessions. Then occurred a few instances of Satanic fury. During their walk a wicked woman cried out on seeing them pass by: "Look at those night birds; they are no doubt the Religious." These words related among the nuns made them terribly frightened, for it was easy to see that they emanated from an enraged patriot. The mistress of the house did not wish that Mass would be celebrated there.

These souls, famishing for the Eucharistic Bread, thought for a moment that they would be deprived of the Source of Life. Father Mercier made them a touching exhortation, as if to prepare them for martyrdom. Then observing that the surroundings were calm he bade his brother-priest celebrate the Holy Sacrifice, and soon after offered his own Mass. They separated before the rising of the sun, in tears and sobs, leaving each other perhaps forever in this life, yet strengthened by the Bread of Life so recently received. In reading this touching recital do we not imagine that we have assisted at the scenes of the early Christians in the Catacombs?

Soon after this barbarous expulsion it was demanded that the Sisters take the schismatic oath. Not satisfied with threats in case of refusal, the Revolutionists also threatened all belonging to them. They were eager to confiscate the goods of all those who had received these poor exiles. Then the vacillating Christians joined their voices to those of the persecutors, and said: "Take the oath that is demanded of you, or begone! Your misfortunes afflict us, and now you want to make us participants in your misery!" The Sister who narrated this said: "I surely esteemed myself happy at that moment that they were no relations of mine, at least that my troubles were not theirs.." The Sisters refused to adhere to the schism, and on their generous and energetic refusal were imprisoned.

On April 3, 1794, the guardians brutally conducted these poor Sisters to Brouage, a little town in the neighborhood of Marennes, a place that would be totally unfit, in our days, for people to live in on account of its unhealthy location.

Those who had been allowed to remain in La Rochelle were no better treated; they showed their heroic constancy in resisting blandishments that would lure them into apostacy. Finally, they were thrust aboard an old ship and taken with many other Religious of different Communities to that place of infection called Brouage.

During their stay there several succumbed to disease and utter exhaustion, brought on by privations and all sorts of misery heaped upon them. Their gross-mannered guardians made them pluck weeds and herbs on the ramparts during the hottest days of summer, without implements save a few knives. A platoon conducted them every day to their work, guarded them, made them do a certain amount of work and then drove them back to their prison at the hours appointed. Food was bad and insufficient, yet their guardians, without doubt more humane than their chiefs, gave some of them permission to ask for alms in the surrounding district.

Finally, all were awaiting the moment they would shed their blood for the faith, when the death of Robespierre put an end to their captivity, during the first days of February, 1795. They had endured bondage for an entire year.

Mother M. of Saint Victoria appears to have escaped. When she learned of their happy deliverance she hastened to return to La Rochelle to receive back the dear persecuted nuns, and to encourage them with her mortherly advice. Thanks to the hospitality of a generous widow, Mme. Galwey, she already had taken care of some of the Religious. They kept in that house many hidden priests, and at that time an excellent ecclesiastic lived there. So from that time on the Sisters had all the religious aid they needed. Gradually affairs grew calm again; those who were in the country returned to La Rochelle, and in short order the Sisters began to make preparations for the reconstruction of their monastery.

EIGHTH MONASTERY—PARIS

1724

CHAPTER I

UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS FOR THE FOUNDATION OF PARIS

DURING his life the Blessed Eudes made persevering efforts to obtain the approbation of Rome for his two Institutes, in order to procure an establishment in Paris, for in his time the influence of that city preponderated throughout France. After having rendered to the Religious of Our Lady of Charity the immense service of having them recognized by the Holy See as a religious Order the zealous founder wished also to procure the establishment of a house in the Capital. The following letter, written to Madame the President d'Argouge, furnishes a proof that needs no further discussion:

J. M. J.

Madame: Here are the good Religious of Our Lady of Charity who do themselves the honor of going to you to see what are your orders, and having learned them they are desirous of carrying them out. They are the daughters of the most amiable Heart of the Mother of God, who are also the daughters of your good heart, since this glorious Virgin has given you the heart and the love of a mother for them.

They come to Paris to seek for the souls that are lost in sin, in imitation of our Savior Who said, speaking of Himself, that He had come to seek and save that which was lost. Among all divine things the most divine, as the great Saint Denis says, is to cooperate with God in the salvation of souls.

Hence, Madame, you cannot do anything more agreeable to the divine Majesty than to procure this employment you have in mind for those daughters. All the souls that will be saved through their intervention shall honor you, after God, as the instrument of their salvation. To gain one soul to God is a greater work than to conquer a hundred thousand worlds. Hence, you will be infinitely richer in heaven than human tongue can ever express.

But what shall I say to you, Madame, to testify to you my gratitude for the goodness you have shown my very dear Sisters? I cannot find words adequate enough to convey my thanks; but I have the most implicit confidence in our most benign Savior and His dearest Mother that they will supply my defective speech, and that they will render you a hundredfold a thousand times over for all the charity and tenderness you have shown them. I shall supplicate them all my life to bestow on you, as well as Bishop d'Argouge, their choicest blessings.

I can assure you, Madame, that I never say Holy Mass without giving you a memento, I who am in them and for them, Madame,

Your very humble, obedient and much obligated servant,
JOHN EUDES,
Priest of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

This letter bears no date, but it might have been written in 1678. For it was in that year that a project had been set on foot by this zealous President for a foundation in Paris. However, it failed, without any motive being assigned. The Sisters had left Caen, and Mother M. of the Trinity Heurtant left her Monastery of Guingamp to join them. The letter, doubtless, was to announce their departure from Caen and their arrival in Paris.

The Annals of Paris and of Guingamp have conserved a prophecy that was uttered after the unsuccessful attempts for this foundation. He distinctly announced that there would be a very flourishing monastery of the Order in Paris, but that this foundation would be accompanied by greater trials than any other convent ever had. The recital that we are commencing is little else save the recital of the trials and crosses endured by the foundresses of this convent. It will be necessary to study the present state of this monastery to see the complete realization of the prophecy.

Mme. d'Argouge was not discouraged by this want of success. She continued the steps she had taken, and in 1682 she had installed in the house of Saint Pelagie Mother M. of the Trinity and Sister M. of the Infant Jesus Feger, Sister M. of Jesus le Morer and Sister Menard, who fulfilled with her usual devotedness the functions of Touriere Sister; these Sisters were from the Monastery of Guingamp. Those that had come from Caen were Sister M. of Saint Agnes des Champs, Sister Mary of Saint Isidore Hellouin du Bocage and Sister M. of Saint Clare, a Lay-Sister.

Today this house is used as a prison, and is situated on the Street du Puits-de-l'Ermite, near the Garden des Plantes, and was founded by Mme. de Miramion, to which was joined a rich portion from the Duchess d'Aiguillon, niece of Cardinal de Richelieu, often mixed up in the history of the Blessed Eudes, and the Ladies de Farinvilliers and de Traversay. The letters patent of the King, granted in 1661, gave it the name of the *Refuge*. The administration of the General Hospital charged itself with its government, and granted it the dependencies of the Hospital of the Pity.

Its first destination was for the detention of those girls and women whom the magistrates would order detained; but a little later Madame Miramion opened an asylum for those who, freely and willingly, desired to live a penitent life. This class became quite numerous, and was known under the title of "Girls of Goodwill." Their lodgings were entirely and distinctly separate from the first, and had their entrance from the Copeau Street.

The Sisters found thirty Penitents who received them in the chapel. The Blessed Sacrament was exposed, and they sang the *Te Deum*. The report was noised abroad that the new Religious had treated them very severely. Some days later several of the Penitents, on account of the fear they had of the Sisters, tried to escape. Stopped by the nuns at the very moment they were in the act of stepping over the enclosure, they were overcome by the kindness of Mother M. of the Trinity, returned to their former allegiance, and were faithful to all their duties.

This remarkable superioress knew how to join severity with sweetness. A Penitent had formed the design of leaving through the instrumentality of her former accomplices. To succeed in this scheme she intended to lock the Sisters in the superior's room during recreation, and her mistress and companions in the work-room. A slight delay on the part of the accomplices of this too-able girl permitted the Sisters to leave their prison, and to bring her back. Mother M. of the Trinity then made her reenter into herself, and see what her duty demanded of her, and also gave her a penance in proportion to her fault.

Under this skilful and firm direction the house of Saint Pelagie was rapidly transformed. Mme. de Miramion and several other noble ladies, as well as their friends, were elated, showed their admiration, and often said that if they had not seen this change with their own eyes they would have refused to believe in it.

Unfortunately the administrators of the hospital showed themselves very defiant when speaking with the Sisters. They refused to confide to them the temporalities of the house. A secular was entrusted to do all the commissions and purchases; his dishonest acts were commented on, but without being able to bring those gentlemen to any better opinion concerning the Religious. They were directly opposed to their receiving novices, and what was still worse, the Archbishop of Paris, Monsignor Francis de Harlay, partook of their sentiments. All wished that the Monasteries of Caen and Guingamp would furnish the Sisters for the government of this house, and take them away when age and infirmity should render it necessary that they be removed from their charges. It was under these unacceptable conditions that the poor Sisters were struggling, and they rendered useless the demands of several young persons who, drawn by the beauty of the work, wished to contribute by their dowries to help on the convent; they had offered dowries of 12,000 and even 20,000 livres.

The Sisters being heartily discouraged wanted to leave. M. and Mme. d'Argouge and Mme. de Miramion encouraged them, and promised to do what they could to make conditions less onerous to them, and to strive to obtain the requisite authorization for the admission of new subjects to profession. Some time after Mme. de Miramion came to assure them that Bishop de Harlay had set his opposition aside, and would permit them to give the habit to the postulants whenever they wished; one of the administrators gave them the same assurance. Reverend M. Poree, superior of the Community, being, consulted, replied that the affirmative answers of such distinguished personages were quite sufficient, and he, himself, proceeded to invest Mlle. de Chalon with the habit of the Order, giving her the name of Sister M. of the Seraphim. She was an excellent subject, whose virtue never flagged amid the most cruel trials that awaited her after this ceremony.

Fifteen days after an officer of Parliament, accompanied by a recorder and a witness, came there to make an enquiry concerning the taking of the habit, and three days later a sentence had been issued by Parliament against the Sisters. It ordained that, to satisfy God, the King and the Parliament whom they had offended, the novice should be unveiled, and returned to her family; that Mother M. of the Trinity should ask pardon of God, the King and the Parliament before all the witnesses of that ceremony, and should be deprived of the

Sacraments for the space of one month, as also the superior who had presided at the ceremony of Clothing. He was placed under an interdict and all his ecclesiastical functions were suspended.

The Parliamentary officer ordered that this sentence be executed at the same hour in public reparation, and for the secularization of the novice. After this affront the superioress, persuaded that nothing of any worth could be effected in such a house, wrote to the Archbishop asking permission to leave and withdraw all her Sisters. Receiving no response, and fearing that a warrant would be issued to oblige them to remain under the conditions made by the administrators, she decided to leave with the Religious and the novice who, under secular clothes, wore her religious garb. They arrived in Caen on December 17, 1683, after a sojourn of fourteen months in Saint Pelagie.

These occurrences will not be surprising upon reflecting that the famous declaration of 1682 had just been issued; that it was the time when Jansenism and Gallicanism were in full swing. They offer a certain consolation in the dolorous times in which we are living. For then, as at present, religious Orders were persecuted.

The fervent novice, Sister M. of the Seraphim, arrived at Guingamp, and there continued her novitiate; but having edified the Community for three months she went to terminate it in heaven. She died on Good Friday, March 31, 1684. Thus God heard and answered the prayer of His little servant.

Those two misfortunes did not check or discourage Mme. d'Argouge. She had learned how priceless is a soul from the teachings of the Blessed Eudes, and her attachment to Our Lady of Charity was unalterable. In 1701 she placed at the disposal of the Archbishop of Paris the sum of 20,000 livres, to facilitate the foundation of a monastery of the Order. In expectation that it would be established in the Capital the revenue from this sum should be portioned between the Monasteries of Rennes and Vannes, already so indebted to the bounty of this lady. She obliged each to maintain five Penitents. The example of such devotedness, so rare in those times and even rarer in our own, was very consoling. The Religious of Our Lady of Charity could well combine the two names of Mme. d'Argouge and Mme. de Camilly, and pray for them as their best benefactors. Not until twenty years later was her perseverance recompensed.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF THE CONVENT OF THE MADELEINE — VOCATION OF MOTHER M. OF THE HEART OF JESUS DE LA GREVE—HER DEPARTURE FOR PARIS — MADEMOISELLE DE CHAUSSERAIS — DIFFICULTIES OF THE MADELEINE — FOUNDATION OF THE MONASTERY OF SAINT MICHAEL

BESIDES Saint Pelagie there were also in Paris other establishments open for Penitents, like the Good Shepherd, founded in 1688 by a pious Hollander convert, Mme. de Combe, and the Convent of the Madeleine. This owed its existence to a simple wine merchant, Robert Montri. In 1618 two poor girls made known to him their desire of being converted and of practicing virtue. Touched by their repentance this charitable man received them into his own house. When other Penitents came to join the first comers his charity went so far as to give them his house, and take his family elsewhere to live. A little later the Marchioness de Maignelay bought a house for them, which they occupied until the Revolution. This house was situated on the Rue des Fontaines; this street was between the Arts-et-Metiers and the ancient Temple. This generous benefactress joined thereto a gift of 101,600 livres, a very considerable sum at that time.

This work became very popular. Louis XIII gave it an annual pension of 3,000 livres on the general receipt of France. Saint Francis de Sales preached there on the feast of Saint Mary Magdalen in 1619. He was asked to allow his Religious to take charge of the house, to which he replied: "It is not yet time; the fruit is not ripe enough; they shall work when the proper time comes."

In effect, on July 13, 1629, at the request of Bishop de Gondi, Saint Chantal sent four Religious there, having at their head Mother Mary Anne Bolain, whom the foundress, herself, had formed to the religious life in the first Monastery of Paris. There were fifty persons in the House of the Madeleine at the time.

They were divided into three classes, each one separated from the other: The first was called the *Madeleine,* and was composed of Penitents whose fervor and piety had shown them to be solid enough to make solemn vows. They wore the habit of the Order of Saint Augustine. The Bull of Pope Urban VII recognized them as true Religious; their Constitutions were compiled by Saint Vincent de Paul, M. le Blanc, Vicar-General, and M. Charton, parish priest of Saint Nicholas-des-Champs, in accord with Mother Bolain. They were approved by Bishop de Gondi after a long experience. The Madeleines recited the Grand Office and lived an austere life.

The second class was called the *Congregation of Saint Martha,* and comprised those who, returning from their sinful wanderings, did not show virtue enough to live with the former, or who could not bind themselves to such a life on account of prior engagements contracted in the world. They wore a gray habit.

In the third class was found a certain number of persons placed in the house against their will, to be forced to do penance; they wore black.

Under the prudent direction of Mother Bolain this house soon counted one hundred and fifty Penitents whose reputation for virtue spread far and wide. Some wealthy society ladies, wishing to edify themselves by their example, decided to get apartments for themselves in the convent; this explains the presence of the Marchioness de Cray and of Mlle. de Chausserais, whom the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity found there on their arrival.

In 1671, on account of many difficulties, the Religious of the Visitation asked their discharge from the Government, and left the house with 20,000 livres revenue, after having expended 180,000 for the construction of some buildings.

The Benedictines of the Abbey de Bival in Normandy governed the house until 1707. It was during their government that the church was built and consecrated on September 2, 1681. Their Sisters of Saint Denis remained only three years, and were replaced by the *Hospitalers of the Mercy of Jesus,* who very soon manifested the desire of being discharged of this painful duty.

Nothing save these continual changes could prove the utility of a special Institute for this difficult labor, and the importance of the providential succor that the Blessed Eudes procured for souls by so timely founding his Order of Our Lady of Charity in the midst of severe trials.

Cardinal de Noailles was very much embarrassed when the Sisters Hospitalers had to be replaced. The Communities of Paris refused to have anything more to do with them. One day this subject came up as a matter of conversation between the Cardinal and his Vicar-General, M. Vivant, when Monsignor de Caumartin, Bishop of Vannes, and M. de Robien, Canon of the diocese, came to pay a visit to the Archbishop. They continued the conversation before them. The Bishop of Vannes proposed the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity for the work. He told them he entertained great esteem for that Order, and that M. de Robien had several relatives among the Religious there. The Cardinal then remembered the foundation of Mme. d'Argouge, and asked the Breton prelate to procure some of those Sisters for Paris.

Bishop de Caumartin charged himself with the affair. In Vannes the Sisters expressed to him their fears on account of the dissensions among the Religious of that period, and, perhaps, of the Jansenistic principles of the Cardinal. Bishop de Caumartin understood too well the reasons they upheld, and did not oblige them to take up the foundation. He then proposed the idea to the Monastery of Rennes; Mother de Carne would willingly undertake the foundation, but Bishop Turpin de Crisse refused absolutely. Being transferred to the Bishopric of Blois in the month of August, 1719, the negotiator addressed himself to Mother M. of Saint Catherine Moisan, Superior of Tours, whose great qualities he deeply appreciated. One of his letters gives us an idea of the wonderful plans of the Archbishop of Paris:

> The views of the Cardinal are not limited to the House of the Madeleine. There are the *Good Shepherd*, the *Savior* and many others which he wishes to hand over to you. It is imperative, in a sense, that one of these establishments would aid the others, for one has letters patent and the others have not. Moreover, there is a considerable foundation for the House of the Madeleine, where it is borne in upon us that the Religious ought to be removed to. In case they could not remain there the foundation could be returned to the Hotel-Dieu. That fact would establish you in Paris, and the intention of the Cardinal would be, I think, to give you another house, where you could have boarders, novices and the general Community, and that they may take Religious from this house to govern the Madeleine, just as up to the present they took the Sisters from the Visitation or the Ursulines. . . .

On account of a recent foundation from her monastery the Superioress of Tours could not furnish subjects herself, but taking this important affair to heart she sent Sister Mary Theresa Hamon, a Touriere, to Paris to follow up the negotiations, and then she wrote to the Sisters of Guingamp, as well as to the Bishop of Treguier, to request them to take it up. Bishop de Kerlivio was very united with Cardinal de Noailles, and very desirous of being agreeable. When his Eminence manifested his desire he promised him that he would ask the Religious, and with his characteristic energy imposed obedience on the Religious of Guingamp without even permitting them to make the least representation. In a rapid survey he designated Mother M. of the Heart of Jesus de la Greve, then in charge, as superior of the new foundation.

She was the providential instrument, prepared for a long time, for this difficult work. The history of the vocation of this holy Religious relates a number of prodigious occurrences in the life of Mother M. of the Trinity Heurtant.

Marie de la Greve belonged to one of the most honorable families of Guingamp, whose morals were truly patriarchal. Her father, M. Keruzoal de la Greve, was the benefactor and counsellor of all the poor, and his virtuous wife nobly aided him by her good works. They had five children: one son, who distinguished himself at the bar as a lawyer, and four daughters, of whom Marie, the eldest, was born on January 21, 1668. From her earliest years her serious tastes and love for work made them place great confidence in her future.

One trait of her infantine merit is worth relating. Being in church with her mother she perceived a stairway practically turning, as she thought, into a thick pillar, and immediately saw a man mounting this spiral stairway. She remembered hearing some one say that the Gate of Heaven was very narrow, and that few entered therein; she imagined that it was that blessed gate he referred to, and quietly leaving her mother's side she commenced to walk up this dangerous stairs. A workman, hearing the noise behind him, roughly asked: "Who's there?" The little one, without the least fear, replied: "It is Marie de la Greve." "But where do you want to go?" asked the man. "I want to go to Paradise," she responded. "You'd certainly get there all right if I had not met you; now you must wait for another opportunity; only I don't know how I'll get you down." It was not without some trouble that he restored her to her mother, who was trembling with fright over the danger her child had run. To go to heaven she had to walk a more difficult road, that of religious perfection.

The little Marie was not yet eight years old when Mother M. of the Trinity arrived on November 20th to found a monastery in Guingamp. As we have said, this holy superioress was wholly occupied with the spiritual edifice that she was building, and passed the night following her arrival in prayer, during which season of mercy God made known to her the families who would furnish the foundation stones for that spiritual edifice. Some time after Mother M. of the Trinity desired to see the young ladies of the de la Greve family. When their mother presented them to her she asked each one separately if she wished to become a Religious; the two youngest consented willingly; the eldest alone was not disposed for such a life, and answered in the negative. Notwithstanding this reply, the venerated superioress, putting her hand on her head, said: *"However, it is you, my dear daughter, whom our Lord and His holy Mother have chosen to be the daughter of their Sacred Hearts, and you shall become one some day."* At that time the child seemed to have no desire for the religious life; in fact, showed no sign of a vocation for that state. Her taste for the vain pleasures of the world and her own personal vanity alarmed her mother, who was very pious. She confided her to a pious young lady, who later on became a Religious under the name of Sister Mary of All-Saints. Mlle. de Lisle destroyed the spirit of vanity in her pupil; by her pious recommendations and personal attractions she drew the thoughts of her pupil to God, and prepared her for her First Communion, which she made at the age of ten years. This Divine Remedy, after a time, worked wonders in the young Marie, and she returned to her paternal home wth very different ideas.

Yet the demon was not vanquished; the beauty of the young girl, and her personal advantages, as well as her natural graces, made her much sought after; in the brilliant drawing-rooms of Vannes and Guingamp she appeared as the belle of the season; wherever she went she was admired and feasted. Mother M. of the Trinity at that time governed the House of Saint Pelagie. She was supernaturally warned of the danger of this inexperienced soul, and wrote to Sister M. of the Holy Spirit de Porcon to send for her, in order to give her an important communication from herself. The Touriere Sister found Mlle. de la Greve in the midst of her young friends, who laughed heartily over the mysterious commission, and, so as to know the object of her hurried call, they accompanied their young friend to the monastery. Sister M. of the Holy Spirit was waiting for her in the parlor; she merely said to her: "I have sent for you to announce to you, on the part of Mother M. of the Trinity, that according to the inspiration that she has received from God you have to enter religion; otherwise, you will be damned."

Fearing the railleries of her young friends Mlle. de la Greve at first resisted the impression that these terrifying words made on her; but on calm reflection she yielded to Divine grace. Pressed by her parents to accept an advantageous marriage she went instead to the Monastery of Our Lady of Charity and asked to be received. Notwithstanding the reproaches and threats of her father, her resolution was unshakable. At her reception of the habit her young sister, who was only three years old, suggested to the celebrant, who was also their uncle, to give her the name of Mary of the Divine Heart of Jesus, instead of another that was assigned for her. This fact appears extraordinary, for it took place on March 8, 1683, and the Sisters of Guingamp, being established only a few years, had not yet propagated the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

During the novitiate of Sister de la Greve the thought that in the future she would be sent to Paris became for her a serious temptation. It was then that Sister M. of All-Saints, her former mistress, made to her this surprising communication: "Be quiet; the foundation of Paris shall not take place yet, and if it shall be concluded you shall have to go there yourself."

Sister M. of the Heart of Jesus passed the time of her novitiate in great fervor. But the battle that continued between herself and family undermined her health. Finally, her father, contrary to all hope, consented to her profession, which took place on the feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul; this was the realization of a prophecy made by Sister M. of All-Saints. This great day was for the new professed the beginning of a new life, a life of sacrifice and devotion. She fulfilled nearly all the offices of the house successively confided to her. She was considered capable of managing the class of Penitents when she attained her twenty-first year, and she acquitted herself of this difficult employment in a perfect manner. To make singing easy for those persons she determined to introduce the singing of hymns among them during their work; she taught them canticles, psalms and the hymns of the Blessed Eudes to the Sacred Hearts.

As infirmarian she worked with heroism, and bestowed the greatest care on Mother M. of Saint Cecelia Neel during her long illness.

She exercised uninterruptedly the charges of counsellor, surveillant and Assistant. Above all the charges she loved that of the sacristy. This charge gave her continual food for her piety. The key of the Tabernacle was always suspended around her neck as a precious relic, and made her often say to herself: "What a happiness for me to be the jailer of my Savior! Ah, if I could enclose myself in His Sacred Heart, I would never leave it!" During her life her chief happiness lay in working for the altars; the sacristies of Guingamp and Paris were enriched by the beautiful hand-embroidered ornaments she made for them.

She was charged for some years with the novitiate, when she was named superioress by the voice of the Community in 1714. Reelected at the end of her first triennial she exercised this charge to the general satisfaction, when obedience to the Bishop sent her to found the Paris house.

This prelate had arranged the day of their departure for the Monday of Quasimodo, April 6th. On the evening of the 5th he came to the monastery to designate those who were to cooperate with Mother M. of the Heart of Jesus. His choice fell on Sister M. of Saint Teresa de Beaulieu Loz, who was to be Assistant, Sister M. of the Infant Jesus du Bot, Sister M. of the Ascension de Chevalier, Sister M. of Saint Celeste Bossinot, and finally a Lay-Sister, Sister M. of Saint Francis de Sales le Guyader. It was designedly that the prelate kept the secret of these obediences; he wished to avoid any fuss being made with their families. Besides, he, himself, made the sacrifice of his niece, Sister Loz. The chaplain who accompanied them to Rennes said his Mass at three o'clock, communicated them, and at four o'clock Bishop de Kerlivio gave the signal for their departure.

During the journey the Sisters consoled themselves a little for the way they were hurried off, by their visits to the

Monasteries of Rennes and Tours. On their arrival in Paris, April 30, 1720, the Mother Superior got an attack of pneumonia. It was very difficult to obtain any relief for her, so black were the Magdalens against her; in this great embarrassment the Sisters were fōrced to have recourse to the Marchioness de Cray, who lived in the house.

The Community of the Madeleine had grown worse by reason of the prosperity in which its members lived after the Visitandines left them. The professed Religious were not more than twelve, the Penitents and other classes about forty. Grave disorders against poverty and enclosure had been introduced; the administration of the temporal goods was confided to strangers, or persons belonging to the house who were wholly incompetent, so that the resources were much diminished. A radical reform was needed. This is the most difficult undertaking on a foundation.

In the midst of these inextricable difficulties Mother de la Greve conducted herself with remarkable tact and prudence. Without any precipitation she studied the ground, spoke with the superiors, and was not willing to enter into the employments of the house and distribute the Sisters until she had marked out a line of conduct for herself and them.

It was then that oppositions commenced. The Madeleines had pretended to govern themselves, and the Religious who had come so far had not understood their pretended rights. When, some time later, Cardinal de Noailles came, himself, with his Vicar-General to read to them the chapter of the regulations that were made, the discontent of those saddened Religious broke out; they complained that they were injured. Even the presence of the Duke of Noailles, who accompanied his uncle, only excited them the more. When the Duke was leaving he remarked that those unfortunate women might attack the new directresses. Mother de la Greve reassured him, and said it was a storm that would soon blow over.

After the departure of the Cardinal and his friends, Mother M. of the Sacred Heart assembled the two Communities, and in a pathetic exhortation showed them the undignified conduct in which they had indulged towards the prelate, thus placing themselves in grave danger of drawing down disgrace upon themselves. The next day the Cardinal ordered that one of the most seditious should be transferred for two years to Saint Pelagia, and another should be unveiled in full chapter and enclosed for a year in her room. These necessary penances, sweetened by the kindness of the Mother Superior, inspired in them all a salutary fear, and the house became more calm.

Soon after Mother de la Greve had hopes of a more favorable establishment for her Order. Near the apartments of Mme. de Cray she found those of Mlle. de Chausserais, which she seldom used. This young lady appeared to enjoy quite an important role among the great ladies of the end of the reign of Louis XIV. Her family belonged originally to Poitou. She had come to the Court while quite young, and obtained many favors from the great King. In the royal residence of the Bois de Boulogne, known under the name of Madrid, he built for her exclusive use a beautiful country house, with a picturesque park on the Seine, fronting Saint Cloud. Here she could fulfil with ease her duties of First Lady of Honor to the Princess Dowager of Orleans, mother of the Duke of Orleans, who was regent since the death of Louis XIV. This prince honored Mlle. de Chausserais with his confidence; she could and did speak quite frankly to him.

So far in the dim distance of time it would be difficult to give an account of the reason why this favor was continued. The principal reason seems to have been a Jansenistic piety that was strongly inculcated in them. This sect cast its roots and then sustained itself by using, in need, the influence of the rich, and their wealth. This known characteristic renders more inexplicable and more providential the benefits that were bestowed on the daughters of the Blessed Eudes.

But we must hasten to say that they did not transact anything regarding this grave question in their relations with Mlle. de Chausserais, nor even with Cardinal de Noailles who had the same tendencies. His Eminence wished to know their opinion, and one day he asked them what they thought about the Church troubles in France. Mother M. of the Heart of Jesus replied with much tact and wisdom: "My Lord, we left a diocese where the new doctrine was not yet known. We have been taught to understand and practice well what has been taught us in our Catechism; for anything else, we have the Rules and Constitutions of our Order, and we make these books our only study." Satisfied with this response the Cardinal exhorted them to remain in their simplicity, and Mlle. de Chausserais proposed to place in the library those books that he liked. He stopped her at once and told her to give them the works of Father Rodriguez or similar authors.

Madame de Cray, full of esteem and respect for Mother de la Greve, urgently requested Mlle. de Chausserais to become acquainted with those Breton Religious. Yielding to a sentiment of curiosity she consented to go to the Madeleine with the Cardinal. Charmed with the simplicity and the spirit of the new superior she complimented his Eminence on his choice, saying: "Keep those Sisters. I shall contribute with you towards their establishment," and turning to the Mother Superior she remarked with her ordinary vivacity: "Mother, I never did like Religious, but I do wish to be friendly with you." The promises of the Cardnal, and the power of their new protectress, made the Sisters feel more hopeful. However, they were not destined to see the realization of their hopes as yet; they had to endure other cruel trials.

By long and persevering research in the ancient title-deeds of the Madeleine the Religious of Our Lady of Charity had to restore important rights to this house, had to make restitution of considerable sums, and had also to put the temporalities in perfect order. To reestablish manual labor, which had been entirely lost in the past government of this house, she put one of the Sisters at the head of those who were willing to work. Thus a double end was attained: order reigned in the convent and their resources were increased.

All these services should have excited among the Madeleines sentiments of esteem and gratitude, since they received and benefited by them; but nothing of the kind. Full of jealousy and a love of ease they complained that they wanted to make their house like those of the Good Shepherd and Saint Pelagie, where work was obligatory. They invented all sorts of calumnies against the government of the Sisters; they composed and published libels against them, and, unhappily, the confessor of the house entered into their intrigues. The Archbishop of Paris came to their aid; sustained the authority of the directresses and changed the confessor.

Here this prelate reveals himself in more advantageous colors than under those in which he is painted in history. His solicitude for that poor house was incessant and full of sweetness and goodness. He desired to see the Sisters of Guingamp more conformable to the Constitutions of the Madeleines.

Those around him said that his power was absolute, and that he could modify the Rules of Our Lady of Charity. Notwithstanding the advice that was so conformable to his views, he would do nothing without consulting the Bishop of Treguier, and invited him by letter to come and see what they could do to regulate this affair. The Bishop made him an energetic reply, which is a summary of the words of Saint Ignatius Loyola: *"Sint ut sunt, aut non sint."* ("They shall remain what they are, or they shall leave.") From that time the Cardinal left the Sisters perfectly quiet on the subject, and continued to bestow his kind attentions on them.

Unfortunately, it was not so with Mlle. de Chausserais. More than ever intoxicated with the world, she forgot her promises, and never spoke of what she said previously of helping to establish the Sisters. So Mother de la Greve saw all hopes of establishing a house vanish into thin air, and more so on account of the evil dispositions of the Regency against religious Orders, which was prefigured in the inconstancy of this lady, and the weariness attendant on the continual vexations of the Madeleines; she solicited for the Sisters and herself the permission to return to their Monastery of Brittany. She was sure she would get this permission, and began to make remote preparations for departure, when the Abbe d'Orsanne, an official, came to declare that his Eminence would never consent, and if it were necessary he would have recourse to royal authority to oblige them to remain in the Madeleine. They had to submit and await the orders of Divine Providence.

The hour was near. On December 2, 1723, the Regent, the Duke of Orleans, died. This sudden death had a great effect on Mlle. de Chausserais, and made her reflect more seriously. Giving up at once the Court, and all its intrigues, she got to work to procure the establishment of the Sisters.

It was a difficult enterprise. First, it was necessary to find a house that would be convenient, and then obtain the letters patent, when Parliament never showed itself more hostile to Religious Communities. The difficulty seemed to excite this benefactress the more. She who, until then, would not lower herself to take the least troublesome step, even to make a request of a prince, passed entire days soliciting the benevolence of different members of Parliament whose consent was necessary. She received them in magnificent state on her property of Madrid, and neglected no means possible to overcome their prejudices. She had need of all her fine tact and ability to set aside the obstacles that were incessantly raised by M. Joli de Fleury, Procurator-General. This magistrate, when he heard it was for the foundation of the Institute founded by Blessed Eudes, showed himself as intractable as for the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. All his life he had been a personal enemy of the Blessed and his works. Mlle. de Chausserais came out with winning colors. She obtained the letters patent in the month of May, 1724.

Reverend Father Le Grand, Eudist, whom his Congregation had sent to Paris to make a trial of an establishment, was ordinarily the helper of Mlle. de Chausserais. It was he who discovered the house and conducted all the negotiations; he made all the journeys that were needed to Versailles, and made use of his credit with Monsignor de Fleury, Bishop of Frejus. Under these circumstances he showed the same devotedness that the Blessed would have shown, and like him, obtained great success both for the Sisters and his own Congregation.

Cardinal de Noailles aided him with all his strength, and by his great authority contributed much to the success of his undertakings. His donations aided materially in the purchase of the house. In the contract, he took with Mlle. de Chausserais the title of founder, and both declared their intention of seeing the Religious of the new establishment inspect all the houses of penitence of Paris, where the Archbishops wished to employ them.

During all this time the Sisters prayed and suffered. They always had recourse to their Blessed founder, and attributed to him the happy results of this difficult affair.

The house was situated on the Street des Posts, called today Lhomond Street, not far from the place bought some years later by the Eudist Fathers. However, it was unfit and unsuitable for the end of the Institute.

Several times the Sisters took measures to move away, but without sufficient resources they could never succeed. The purchases, the appropriations, the extinction of seigneurial rights and the moving, all amounted to nearly 200,000 livres, which sum was furnished partly by the Cardinal and especially by the foundress. The new monastery was blessed on June 20th by the Abbe d'Orsanne, delegated by Cardinal de Noailles, in presence of Mlle. de Chausserais and Father

Le Grand. The latter having suffered with them in their sorrow it was but meet that he should rejoice with them. This monastery was placed under the protection of Saint Michael, and in taking this name they also pleased the Duke of Noailles. The Annalist of the convent said that it was not without a motive that this name was given it, for did they not come to Paris to combat the infernal dragon, after the example of the Captain of the Celestial Militia! The foundress did not wish that the Sisters would be confounded with the Ladies of Charity, when testamentary acts were in question.

On June 24, 1724, the ten new Religious asked of Guingamp arrived in Paris. The next day, by the gracious order of the Cardinal, the Sisters went to pass the day with the foundress in her beautiful residence of Madrid. His Eminence went there, himself, and was extremely kind to them.

The regular installation in the monastery took place on the feast of Saint Michael. Mother M. of the Heart of Jesus was elected superioress, but the Archbishop demanded that for the first time she should unite the government of the Madeleine to that of the new monastery.

This order obliged the Sisters to go and come continually, which was very painful to them, for the distance was unusual—it was so far from the Temple to the Hill of Saint Genevieve. Mother de la Greve held this double charge for ten years, until she had formed subjects capable of replacing her at the Madeleine.

Mother M. of the Heart of Jesus de la Greve

CHAPTER III

SUPERIORITIES OF MOTHER M. OF SAINT CELESTE BOSSINOT DE LA BREHAUDAIS, MOTHER M. OF THE HEART OF JESUS DE LA GREVE, AND MOTHER M. OF THE ASCENSION CHEVALIER —REENTRANCE OF THE SISTERS IN THE MADELEINE

THE Convent of Saint Michael had hardly been canonically erected when the work for the Penitents commenced. It was the desire of Mlle. de Chausserais; the Court was responsible for the sending of some ladies there by warrant. The Sisters were consoled by several very edifying conversions; some of these being sincerely converted, they embraced the religious life in other Communities, where they persevered until death. But the exiguity of the buildings hindered the observance of the Constitutions, which ordered complete separation between the Religious and the Penitents. The Sisters were often obliged to sleep in the same rooms that lodged the persons they took care of. Their lives were seriously menaced several times. A special protection of God alone prevented many crimes. Then, the walls of the enclosure were so low and poor that there were several successful escapes accomplished. All these reasons made the Sisters feel they would never have much success in exercising the principal work of their vocation. However, they always received some Penitents until their suppression, for there are some warrants shown in the National Archives dated from the reign of Louis XVI.

It was much easier to exercise their zeal among ladies and children whom they received as boarders; they had always as many of those as their small accommodations permitted.

The edifying death of several of these ladies is related in the Annals of the house; the children also gave them much consolation. The first that was received, even before the purchase of the house, was Mlle. de Chassonville, the niece of the foundress. While still very young she caused much affliction to her family, especially to her aunt, on account of her bad conduct.

Mother de la Greve understood the grief caused to Mlle. de Chausserais, and proposed to take charge of the education of this unruly child. Her success was complete—so complete, indeed, that on October 8, 1727, Mlle. de Chassonville took the habit under the name of Sister M. of Saint Louis, and died Superior of the Monastery in 1776.

Their principal work then was the direction of the Madeleine. In this house, trouble with its fruit and merit was always in the ascendant. The recital of all the storms that jealousy and ambition raised would only offer a fatiguing and troublesome task, not to mention the reading of it. The incontestable wisdom of the Rules established by the Blessed Eudes was shown in all its pristine beauty. Truly, no house that has been faithful in following those Rules ever presented as sad a spectacle or suffered from so many scandals. Divine Justice laid its heavy hand upon some of the most guilty and that in a visible manner. In 1734 Mother de la Greve, herself, notwithstanding her zeal for the salvation of souls, asked Cardinal de Vintimille to be relieved of the undertaking as too difficult to direct. This prelate, newly promoted to the See of Paris, and consequently not in touch with the disagreeable condition of affairs, gave the desired permission for the Sisters to go. He soon repented of his decision, and hastened to repair his fault.

At the time of her departure from the Madeleine Mother de la Greve was prioress. During her two triennials at Saint Michael she had given all the necessary care and direction to her little Community and to the direction of her novices. She principally applied herself to have charity reign in their midst; the maxim of the beloved disciple was often on her lips: "My children, love one another." All the Sisters who had made their novitiate under her direction in Guingamp were delighted to submit to her again.

In 1729 she had the misfortune to lose Cardinal de Noailles, whose devotedness to the Community never diminished. Very often he came on Thursday to assist at the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and on those occasions they sang for him and the foundress, and he showed how happy he felt; indeed, he seemed to be like a good father in the midst of his children. Mlle. de Chausserais, by his counsel, left by will a considerable amount of money for the aggrandizement of the monastery.

This last act of benevolence became void as far as the getting of the sum of money went, for on her death bed Mlle. de Chausserais was surrounded by fiery Jansenists; she died in March, 1733. These Jansenists revoked the disposal of her legacy, through hatred for the Sisters of Saint Michael, who did not and would not associate themselves to their sect. They even went so far as to refuse Mother de la Greve the consolation of seeing the benefactress of their convent for the last time. This loss was irreparable; Saint Michael, consequently, continued in its extreme poverty without hope of redress.

With strict exactitude the Community said all the prayers prescribed for the founders. The Mother Superior even demanded them from all the monasteries of the Institute.

Mother M. of Saint Celeste Bossinot de la Brehaudais was in charge at the time of this death. This Sister, as the history of Mother Mary Anne of Jesus Bossinot tells us, was born in Saint Malo. From the boarding school of Guingamp she passed to the novitiate. Her example was followed later by her young sisters. Soon after her profession her superiors charged Sister M. of Saint Celeste with teaching some of the Penitents to embroider church ornaments. She had a great aptitude for this fancy work, as well as all kinds of delicate embroidery and eventually it undermined her health. But it was no motive for declining the obedience given her; too great application caused her a serious illness which placed her life in jeopardy. This sad event inspired her with no regret for her sacrifice, nor fear for more painful work in the future. It was visible that obedience rendered everything easy. Without making any excuses for her poor health she left for Paris with the first Sisters that were sent to govern the Madeleine.

In this house Sister M. of Saint Celeste found many occasions for exercising her zeal. She was in turn portress and mistress of the work. It will be easy to imagine what she had to undergo in this latter employment while attending to this duty, having under her those ungrateful creatures who then lived in the Madeleine. When the purchase of the house of Saint Michael was concluded Sister Bossinot was named econome, so as to see to all the work that was going on. She proposed to make it commodious enough so as to render the change less painful for the ten Sisters who came from Guingamp for the foundation. She gained the whole Community by her affability and sweetness, and she was elected superioress at the deposition of Mother de la Greve. During her triennial she made fruitless attempts to procure a more suitable place for a convent. All her attempts, either at Montrouge or two leagues from Paris, miscarried, notwithstanding her ability.

In 1734 Mother de la Greve became free to abandon the Madeleine, and was reelected. During this second government she took an active part in the Assembly of 1734 when the Constitutions and the Custom-Book were rewritten. It was at that time also that, by the advice of experienced men, the purchase of the Hotel de Gournay was concluded; it was in the suburb of Saint Anthony. The good Mother was the only one that did not rejoice over the affair, which to the eyes of all appeared so favorable for the Community. In effect, Mme. de Bourbon, Abbess of Saint Anthony, opposed the sale, and managed, after an expensive lawsuit, to annul it. Saint Michael lost by this unlawful act more than 50,000 livres.

It was at this time, as we have noted in the history of the first monastery, that Mother de la Greve rejoiced at having received the approbation of the Constitutions from Pope Benedict XIV.

In 1740 Mother M. of the Ascension Chevalier was elected superioress. She was born at Landerneau, where her father was director of the postoffice. Educated by the pious zeal of the Ursulines of her native city, she naturally was attracted to the religious life. It was desirable in her eyes on account of her constant connection with the Monastery of Mont-Bariel of Guingamp. She asked admission into the novitiate, to the general satisfaction of the Sisters. We have recounted in the history of this monastery how she was suddenly cured of deafness through the intercession of the Blessed Eudes. After her profession they quickly discovered in her a remarkable aptitude for the office of secretary. Being sent to Paris in 1720 she rendered the most signal services to the Madeleine in putting the archives in order, and having important claims restored, of which this house had been deprived through culpable negligence.

According to the author of her biography it was not only at the Madeleine and the Convent of Saint Michael that Sister M. of the Ascension had made herself useful, but in all the monasteries of the Institute. She was looked upon as a general agent, and busied herself with their affairs with the greatest care. At the Assembly she was unanimously chosen by a vote as secretary for the occasion, and in this capacity contributed efficaciously towards the success of the undertaking. Some years later it was through her intelligent aid that Mother de la Greve obtained from the Holy See the definitive approbation of the Constitutions. Her exquisite politeness gained all hearts, and business men were often subjugated by the charm of her conversation and her simple piety. She never lost patience. Often after nights spent in wearisome writing she was ordered to write it over on account of some misplaced words; she did as she was bid with as good grace as at her first attempt.

The Annals speak also of her tender devotion to the Sacred Hearts. Sister M. of the Ascension was always ready to compose new hymns in their honor; she wished that all the words and all the letters that she formed were so many acts of love towards them. She had been inspired to do this by the writings of the Blessed Institutor.

Under the administration of Mother Chevalier the Community acquired in the de Chaillot quarter, a piece of land eminently fitted for buildings. For the purchase money she counted on the proceeds of the sale of the Hotel de Gournay. The inexplainable delay caused by the Abbess de Gournay. ony in clearing off the debt increased the liabilities on the Convent of Saint Michael, which could not utilize this fine piece of ground.

The deposition of Mother Chevalier took place when the Cardinal de Vintimille was named for the Archbishopric. She went there with the Assistant, Sister M. of Saint Celeste Bossinot. His Eminence said to them in a pleasant way: "I committed a great sin, nine years ago, in letting you leave the Madeleine. Now I ask you to help me to repair it, and I hope you will not refuse me. I have changed the direction of that house twice since you left, and now I wish you would take it up within twenty-four hours, if possible." Surprised and terrified at this proposition the Sisters besought his Eminence, before deciding, to wait for the new election which would take place in a few days.

Having left the Archbishop's palace they asked themselves how they were to announce the news to the Community, especially to Mother de la Greve, who was then gravely ill. But they did not know the sentiments of this worthy daughter of the Blessed Eudes when they spoke thus. The proposal of the Archbishop appeared to give her new life, and seeing the Community embarrassed in their choice of subjects for this hard and thankless task she said with energy: " I shall go myself; we must not let such an occasion pass in which we can sacrifice ourselves for the salvation of souls."

Being elected superioress she accompanied the Sisters whom she had designated to the Cardinal. This prelate wished to conduct them, himself, to the Madeleine. But when the Madeleines perceived the Sisters they revolted, and cried out at the top of their voices: "We do not want the *white Mothers.*" The Cardinal and the clergy who accompanied him were indignant at such effrontery, and asked each other what would be the end of these violent scenes. The Religious were quite calm.

The Cardinal then tried to reason with the poor misguided creatures: "You do not want the white Mothers; when I gave you the black ones what did you do? Do you want me to give you gray ones? What do you want me to do?" "Your Eminence," they replied, "we are Religious, and we would rather lose 4,500 livres of rent in favor of the Hotel-Dieu, and govern ourselves. We do not want the ladies of Saint Michael." "And I do not want to lose," replied the Cardinal. "I prefer to gain. My will shall be accomplished, or you shall all be dispersed to the different houses of penitence." At these words he left them, trembling for the Religious he was leaving to their tender mercies. He bade the superioress to advise him the following morning as to developments.

Mother de la Greve assembled the Madeleines in Chapter to sing the *Te Deum* according to the usage at an election of a superioress. But these saddened Religious were suddenly attacked with a loss of voice, complaining they could not sing; the facts were they had no books. One young Sister who had come from Saint Michael resolutely entoned the hymn of thanksgiving; some of them joined in it exteriorly; the ceremony was at least a safeguard. The good Mother then addressed to them some words of exhortation, and seeing them grow more calm she left, leaving with them the prioress, Sister M. of Saint Celeste Bossinot.

There was some difficulty at matins during the rejoicing that followed, for this happened on June 23d, vigil of Saint John Baptist. It was customary in this house to have a little bonfire; Mother Bossinot ordered that everything should be as customary, saying that matins was a point of the Rule, and it was necessary they should conform to everything; that the bonfire was a good custom, and she did not see why it should be omitted. Everything, then, was done as was customary, and even around the bonfire their voices returned, and all joined in the accustomed chants.

The Sisters had been warned that there were no rooms or beds ready for them; they replied that just for this once they were willing to pass the night in chairs. This mortification was carefully avoided. Their rage was appeased, the principal Madeleines came to look up the Sisters, and declared to them that they saw their arrival was really the Will of God. "For," said they, "we have had many Masses said in all the Sanctuaries of Paris that we might not be obliged to submit to the white Mothers, and it is just you that they sent us." The chambers and nine beds were found ready for them. Next morning the Cardinal de Vintimille was amused and surprised to learn the details.

This episode was the last reviving protest made by the Madeleines; the backbone of contention was broken. From that day forth they cheerfully accepted the direction of the Sisters of Saint Michael. The only complaint they made was when the changes of the Rule were made six years later, when Mother M. of Saint Celeste was elected superioress of the convent. The Madeleines did not want the Cardinal to leave until he listened to their claims; doubtless he did so, being glad to know that peace again reigned. He had been much annoyed with their continued strife during his episcopal administration. Mother de la Greve, in order to safeguard the election of the Sisters, was obliged to recall the conditions of the contract made with Bishop de Noailles. Wishing to put this point of the Rules beyond question, as also that which ordained that the same Sisters should not be always employed with the Penitents, she had a special Custom-Book drawn up for the Madeleines.

This was about the last service that this respected Mother rendered the Community. Deposed in 1749 she felt her years and infirmities weighing more heavily upon her feeble shoulders—so weighty, indeed, that they often placed her in danger of succumbing. She was obliged to keep to her bed after July 12, 1750, but her love of regularity never lessened. She yielded up her beautiful soul to her Maker on July 31, 1750. She was aged eighty-two years, and had spent sixty-seven in the religious life. Her virtues and the foundation of Paris legitimately place her in the front rank as one of the most remarkable superiors of the Order of Our Lady of Charity.

In finishing this chapter we will also make known the last years of Mother M. of the Ascension Chevalier. After her deposition this venerated Sister was delighted to take up again the common life and her duties as secretary. Mother de Kersulguen had her commence the compilation of the Annals of the Monastery of Saint Michael; but worn out by age and infirmities Sister Chevalier completely lost her memory and even her intelligence. In this sad state she kept up the habit of asking for nothing, and refusing nothing presented her. She appeared to live a life of continual prayer, and the days were hardly long enough for her to finish the exercises she set about performing. She died holily in the eighty-third year of her age, on January 28, 1766.

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CHAPTER IV

DEATHS OF SEVERAL SISTERS, MOTHERS M. OF SAINT EULALIA DE LA BOISSERE DE KERSULGUEN, MARY OF JESUS DU LEZARD DE BIZIEN AND MARY TERESA OF SAINT LOUIS DE CHASSONVILLE

Tœ5 Sisters had been in Paris some thirty years, and they had lost only two before Mother de la Greve, but under Mother Bossinot death demanded several sacrifices.

The first was Sister M. of the Presentation Secret, econome of the Madeleine. Charity towards the poor was her characteristic trait. The unfortunate came from all over Paris to consult her in their troubles and illnesses; the remedies that she gave them were simple, but always efficacious, because she joined her prayers to their curative properties. The concourse of people became so considerable that her service to the house became interfered with. The superiors had to forbid her to receive them. This was a great sacrifice for her compassionate heart. Having returned sick to Saint Michael she died in the holiest dispositions on February 27, 1751.

Less than two years after this occurrence, God called to Himself the Prioress of the Madeleine. Sister M. of the Infant Jesus le Du Bot had a special gift for gaining souls to God; in Guingamp and in Paris she had been the instrument of numerous unexpected conversions. It was the fruit of her fervent prayers and great mortifications. A young person belonging to the Madeleine was strongly tempted to return to the world, but she felt some irresistible force holding her back when she was on the point of yielding to the temptation. She understood that it was her mistress who was keeping her back by her prayers. One day, when this Sister had communicated and had been more recollected than usual, this person approached her and said with great vehemence: "Mother, pray for the others if you want to, but do not bother about me; I am so upset, and mad at myself for being upset, for I feel you are praying for me." Finally, she was overcome by the efficacy of those prayers; the Sister kept on without any interruption; at length she became one of the Religious Madeleines and lived piously until her death.

The illness that snatched away Sister M. of the Infant Jesus did not permit them to take her back to Saint Michael. The Madeleines, who venerated her as a saint, eagerly requested the favor of keeping her remains, which was granted them. It was one tie more between the two Communities. Sister M. Teresa of Saint Louis de Chassonville was named to replace her.

The Community of Saint Michael was very impoverished. There remained only nine choir Sisters, of whom four were infirm. So Mother Bosinot asked the House of Guingamp for some Sisters; this request was charitably granted.

This help came none too soon, for scarcely had the three Sisters come from Guingamp than the superioress was attacked with paralysis, and died on March 17, 1754.

The Sisters elected as her successor Mother M. of Saint Eulalia de la Boissiere de Kersulguen. The new superioress belonged to one of the noblest and wealthiest families of Brittany. Educated in the Monastery of Guingamp, with one of her little sisters, who died in the odor of sanctity in her seventh year, Mlle. de la Boissiere was drawn to God by an act of humility performed by one of her mistresses.

This Religious, having failed in some duty to one of the boarders, and recognizing her fault, was not afraid to go on her knees before the child and ask her pardon. Far from losing her authority by this act of humiliation this Sister became an object of special veneration to the pupils, and Mlle. de la Boissiere began to comprehend the worth of the religious life, and then determined to embrace it. It was easy to judge of her advancement during her novitiate by her humility and mortification. These were the two virtues for which she was most remarkable during her long career.

When she was designated to be superior of the foundation of Paris there arose within her heart a mighty battle. She feared to fail in obedience, and on the other hand, she feared that her sorrow arose from her too great affection for Mother M. of the Heart of Jesus, and might be the real obstacle. Obedience carried the day. During thirty years she had given the most tender care to Mother de la Greve, either in Saint Michael's Convent or at the Madeleine. This intimacy with the venerated Mother was the occasion of numerous sufferings for Sister M. of Saint Eulalia, but her meekness and charity with the Sisters who caused it never lessened.

Her election to the superiority was the great trial of her life. She did all that was possible to escape the burden. Obliged to yield to the will of the Archbishop and the Sisters, she employed all the zeal she was mistress of in fulfilling the obligations of her charge. Never was poverty more cruelly felt than in those years. Urgent repairs were needed on account of the bad condition of the convent, and all the requests that had been made to the charitable committees were absolutely useless; they could get nothing from the King. The poor Mother did not know how she could provision forty-five persons then in the house. To the butcher alone they owed more than 6,000 livres; it was the same with the other creditors, and all refused to give them any more credit. Some providential aid permitted Mother M. of Saint Eulalia to meet the most pressing needs.

After her deposition in 1760 this Mother was for some time Prioress of the Madeleine. At length yielding to her irresistible attraction for the hidden life, after spending forty-two years in Paris, she asked to return to Guingamp. She lived there several years in the practice of her dear virtues of obedience and humility, and finally yielded up her soul to the Lord on November 26, 1777.

Mother M. of Jesus du Lezard de Bizien succeeded her as superioress in 1760. This noble Sister had had much to do to overcome family ties in order to follow her vocation. Her family wished to settle her in the world, and the wife of the Marshal d'Estrees was very desirous to have her as her lady companion. But nothing was capable of overcoming her energetic resolution; still, to escape those solicitations more completely, as well as those of her parents, she quitted Rennes, and came to Paris, where she presented herself to the Superioress of the Monastery of Saint Michael.

During the three years of her superiority she had, like her who preceded her, to suffer much from the poverty of the convent. She did not show herself less generous in providing for the needs of the sick Sisters. The charity of Mother de Bizien in their regard would be difficult to equal. Ordinarily, she suffered much herself, so she tenderly compassionated the miseries of others. Her weakened constitution obliged her, by medical advice, to ask to return to her native place, hoping that the air would benefit her. She then went to the Monastery of Rennes, where she got better. The Sisters of this convent were very edified by her regularity, her humility and her desire of being useful. She died full of merits on October 4, 1780.

Happily, in the midst of the trials of these two superiorities the Sisters were not deprived of religious succor, like so many other convents. The Annals of Saint Michel give a sad picture of the Jansenistic and Parliamentary persecution against the clergy of that period. Many priests were imprisoned or had to fly the country, if they could not secrete themselves. Of forty ecclesiastics that were in the parish when the Sisters arrived, very few remained. The Vicar was in prison at Chatelet for over a year; the Cure had fled. At Saint Michael religious services were performed by Father Beurier, Superior of the Eudists, and by Father Lefevre, his successor. In 1703 the Eudists had bought a house in this same street of the Postes, and they left it in 1727; today it belongs to the Jesuit Fathers. They were always ready to serve the Sisters as far as lay in their power, as Father Costil relates in the Annals of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.

Mother M. Teresa of Saint Louis de Chassonville, niece of Mlle. de Chausserais, entered on her charge in 1763. Her government was a time of regeneration for the Community. The generous gifts of a holy priest, Father Lemoine, allowed the Sisters not only to pay a part of their great debts, but also to somewhat enlarge their place by the purchase of a house near the convent. The novitiate was now more numerous than it had ever been. It counted six novices and two choir postulants.

These recruits were most necessary; for different reasons several Sisters who had come there from Guingamp returned to the house of their profession, and death multiplied the vacancies. In less than ten years ten Sisters had died. It was a great number for a small Community.

We shall only mention one of these, a simple Lay-Sister, Mary of Saint Rene le Gaffrie. Of an excellent family she accepted her humble condition with pleasurable anticipations, hoping to sanctify herself in the most difficult employments. She had been charged for forty years with the kitchen and dispensary; these labors, no matter how troublesome and worrisome, never affected her amiable mood. Always ready to render service to others she did not know how to make a refusal when ordered to do so by obedience. Her natural disposition always inclined her to be agreeable; this generous disposition was for her many times an occasion of torment. If a dish was returned to her, and had not been touched, she immediately worried herself thinking it had been bady prepared. The fear that she would not have enough, or that it had not been just so, made her desirous of inviting the Sisters to begin their repast over, without thinking of her own extra trouble. So in every case her humility and devotedness found means of exercising her virtue.

Mother M. of the Heart of Jesus de la Greve, niece of the venerated foundress of that name, was elected at the end of the two triennials of Mother de Chassonville. God had providentially prepared this remarkable superioress to direct the Sisters during the evil days through which they had to go. The commencement of the history of this convent has made known the faith and nobility of her family. M. de la Greve confided his child to her aunt. It was in the Monastery of Paris and under the direction of this able mistress that she got her education. The heart of the pious young girl felt an attraction to the religious life, but she did not have the courage to follow it at first. Mlle. de la Greve was delighted to be recalled by her father to take her place in the family circle when she was fifteen years old, and was more happy still to enjoy the worldly prospects spread out before her. In her artlessness and natural uprightness she believed as true all the compliments that were offered her, never thinking that they would so deceive her, so like the bee she plucked the honey from the flower of her youth and felt that she was happy. Notwithstanding the charms of this sweet family life the Divine Call knocked at her heart and yet more loudly did the knock come until it became an irresistible sound that called Mlle. de la Greve on every social occasion. Worn out by feeling she was called, and fear lest she would not be permitted to follow the Divine *Veni,* she concluded to retire a few days to Mont Bariel, where she had some relatives among the Religious, and from there she wrote to her venerated aunt in Paris to announce her intention of joining her later on. This self-banishment from Brittany made her break with one blow all the ties that bound her to the world.

The Community of Saint Michael was happy over this generous sacrifice, and Mother de la Greve promised to form this novice to all the virtues. She did not spare her the ordinary trials of the novitiate; she found her niece perfectly docile. God, Himself, gave no repose to this soul when she committed a fault. One time at confession she dared not, she told her confessor, receive absolution, because she felt so troubled about—she knew not what. The director, supernaturally enlightened, responded: "Your trouble comes from having put one pin in your veil that the Rule does not allow. Take it out, and you will find peace." The young Sister gave up this little vanity, and recovered her peace of mind. She distinguished herself above her companions from the very first by her attachment to her vocation. They often heard her repeat: "I love the very dust of the monastery."

The death of her aunt did not prove a detriment to this love; it only furnished her with the occasion of showing the talents that God had bestowed on her, for after the loss of her aunt she was named Prioress of the Madeleine. In this difficult employment Sister M. of the Heart of Jesus gained the affection of all under her care. She appears to have been one of those that showed the most aptitude for governing that house. She was in charge when, to the great sorrow of the Madeleines, she was elected superioress by the Sisters of Saint Michael.

Having returned to the monastery she showed the same spirit as had actuated, in former years, her aunt, of holy memory, and she governed with the same tact and firmness. They could say of her: "The least venial fault in her heart proved mortal." A novice was reading the Rule in the refectory; she changed the old expressions for more modern ones; Mother de la Greve stopped her at once and said: "My dear Sister, you are too young to change the Rule; be kind enough to read it as it is written." It was in this way that she reproved the slightest faults; it goes without saying that there was perfect regularity maintained by her in the Community. When in 1775 Mother de Chassonville died after an illness of eight months, which she bore with invincible patience, Mother de la Greve was elected to succeed her.

Her government and that of Mother M. of Saint Michael Guillouzou, who replaced her during three years, were especially remarkable for the fruitless attempts they made for the reconstruction of the convent. The buildings being so old, they were, so to say, just ready to collapse; there was so much danger of this that those who were living there were in dread of losing their lives. Monsignor de Juigne, M. le Noir, Prefect of Police, and Father des Forges, confessor of the Community, did all they could to aid the Sisters. But the bad condition of the finances and the embryonic sounds of the coming Revolution made their attempts useless. Perhaps these good Mothers failed in putting forward their claims. They wanted the administrators to do everything, without their initiative, assured that they would keep their word, given at the beginning. In our own century new houses displayed more confidence in Divine Providence, and they are better supplied by private charity. Neither one nor the other ever fails.

But of all the evidence left regarding their hopes, which vanished as soon as conceived, there remains a sweet perfume of virtue, for all was inspired by their zeal for the salvation of souls. The Religious of Saint Michael suffered because they were not able to extend the obligations of their fourth vow outside, save by the direction of the Madeleines. There, it is true, they were consoled by the peace and goodwill that reigned, but they would have been more pleased to do this good in their own monastery for there they would be more at liberty.

In 1777 the parish priest of Saint Etienne, a relative of Mother de la Greve, who was invited to sing High Mass on the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, gave an agreeable surprise to the Community by bringing Bishop de Vence to pontificate. This little incident, related with so much care, shows with what persevering devotion they kept up the feasts of the Sacred Hearts. The biographies of many of the Sisters tell of their tender love for this traditional worship in their Community. We read also in the Annals that an excellent novice entered first in a monastery where this devotion did not exist; she left in order to satisfy her attraction for this consoling devotion, and found with joy her place of repose.

The Community letter of 1784 paints in the darkest colors the horrors of the winter of that year. To the awful woes of famine was added a lack of firing; no fuel could be had save what they could pick up. Snow was abundant, the ice lay thick on land and water, hindering all communication. The inexhaustible charity of the good King Louis XVI, and the wise measures taken by the officials were alike powerless to relieve so much misery. The Sisters suffered perhaps less than other Communities, thanks to the benevolence of M. le Noir, Prefect of Police, their benefactor and devoted friend; being charged with the distributions, he saw that they got as large a portion as possible.

In the midst of these calamities, crimes and sacrileges, signs of every kind seemed to be but the *avant-coureurs* of still greater social upheavals; everything seemed to point out some awful catastrophe, and terror seized hold of even those who were usually strong-minded and energetic. The guilty sent the bloody heads of their victims to several Communities with threatening letters. The needed repairs were held in abeyance for that year. As has been already stated in describing the Monastery of Caen of 1678 the Sisters of Saint Michael were affiliated with the Religious of the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The circular-letter says textually: "It was with the Ladies of the first Monastery of Paris that we had the honor of making this spiritual transaction; we had been united with them before this, as our holy institutor was their superior." This house was situated on the Rue Cassette. None of the historians of the Blessed spoke of this superiority, but the fact is proved by the tradition of the intimate relations that existed between him and the Benedictines of the Blessed Sacrament.

In 1788 Mother de la Greve succeeded Mother Guillouzou and exercised the charge until her death in 1799. When her deposition became obligatory in 1791, in order to obey the Constitutions, the superiors and Sisters thought it wiser not to permit the deposition under the sad circumstances that surrounded them.

Like the preceding, the winter season has been described by the Annals as dismal in the extreme. Notwithstanding the relief authorized by the Archbishop it was hard to pass the Lenten days. The Touriere Sister usually left the Monastery at five o'clock every morning, and aided by the Brother Procurator of the Eudists, would try to make purchases of food, but without any success.

The union between the two Communities was intimate. Very often Father Hebert, confessor to Louis XVI, and martyr of the Carmes, carried letters to the Sisters from the Monastery of Caen, and waited for an answer. The life of this Father shows him to have been the ordinary confessor of Saint Michael's during those sad years. He gave to that well-tried Community all the service in his power, temporal and spiritual, and the Sisters aided him in hiding and helping him to fulfill his difficult ministry. The Touriere Sister was carrying him provisions when on the way she learned of the terrible massacre at Carmes. She had the courage to continue her walk to make assurance doubly sure. The sad spectacle that was presented to her shrinking gaze made such a painful impression on her that she could hardly go back to the convent. On her arrival she was so stunned that she was almost bereft of speech; she could say naught else except: "They killed them." It was only after a long rest that she was able to speak coherently and relate what she had seen.

In 1786 the circular-letter gives an account of the personnel of the house: "Our Community is composed of sixteen Religious of the choir, of whom four are Madeleines, five Lay-Sisters, one postulant of the same rank, two aspirants of the rank of the Tourieres, and in all about twenty boarders." The difficulty lay in providing for these forty and more persons, during such hard times.

This difficulty became even greater during the following years. Notwithstanding this extreme poverty the Sisters gave alms to the poor, although nearly as poor themselves; especially were they solicitous for the persecuted priests. One day when Sister M. of the Infant Jesus had exhausted nearly all the money in this charitable way some one came to the parlor and asked to see her. She went there, feeling quite sad thinking of the little she had left. Preoccupied with this thought she did not even look up to see who wanted her; she spoke with deep feeling: "Sir, we have only thirty sous in the house; we willingly give them to you; we only regret we can't offer you any more." The visitor smiled, and replied: "Madame, may God recompense your goodwill! But I have not come to ask for anything; on the contrary, some person who was warned during prayer about your misery has sent me here to give you this sum." This truly providential succor reanimated the confidence and courage of the Sisters.

Their superior, M. Lemoine, was very devoted to them, and procured them some alms. In his conferences he often spoke to them of the religious spirit, consoling and urging them to be very faithful. He made his canonical visit at the end of June, 1790.

The charity of the Sisters to those priests who remained faithful was recompensed by the religious succor they received. They had the happiness of having Mass up to the time of their expulsion. A Breton priest, who sought refuge in Paris, even gave a spiritual retreat. The noise of the alarm bell and the drum caused no distraction to the Sisters, and seemed to contribute to the eloquence of the preacher and the fervor of the solitaries, for they looked upon their retreat as a preparation for death.

CHAPTER V

THE REVOLUTION — EXPULSION OF THE SISTERS — THEIR DIFFERENT HABITATIONS DURING THOSE EVIL DAYS — THEIR TRIALS

AT the time when the canonical visit, of which we have spoken, took place the Revolution was the complete mistress of France. Domiciliary visits had commenced in all the Communities. The revolutionary committees wished to lord it over every one, even wanted to preside at the elections of superiors and economes. One day, when they had everything in readiness, the delegates presented themselves at the Convent of Saint Michael. All the Sisters, Lay-Sisters, too, had to make their bow to the *Citizens*, and tell them whom they wanted to elect. Every one unanimously named the same Sisters who were already in charge. This unanimity surprised the revolutionary delegates, little habituated to union and charity in their own elections. On leaving they promised to make a satisfactory report, concerning the Sisters, to those who had sent them.

When the National Assembly decreed the suppression of all religious Orders the Community life was but one long bitter agony. The Sisters, to avert the wrath of God, made a vow to receive gratuitously two young Penitents if the Church would be restored to tranquility. Alas! many among them were not destined to see the dawn of that beautiful day. During that year, 1791, death snatched Sister M. of Saint Francis de Chantal Marny from the terrors and trials of the Revolution.

On May 25, 1791, this Sister had returned from the Madeleine with Sister M. of the Nativity Mouchard and Sister M. of Saint Anthony Ticquant on a letter of obedience written by M. Lemoine, Bishop de Juigne having emigrated. The Annals are silent concerning the reason for leaving some months before the expulsion. It is probable that the revolutionary committee had yielded to the request of the Madeleines, as they wanted to govern themselves. The last account rendered of the receipts and expenditures made by the

Sisters showed that good order reigned in the house until the beginning of the Revolution. In 1782 the receipts were 31,163 livres and the expenses were 30,214 livres. This prosperity disappeared with the years 1789 and 1790. The last prioress was Sister M. of the Nativity Mouchard.

On September 4th, two days after the massacres of the Carmes and the Abbey, the Commissaries of the Observatory Section came to place the seal on the Convent of Saint Michael, and they signified to the Sisters that they must leave the precincts by the 8th of the same month. They only allowed the Sisters to carry away with them what belonged to their cells. This decree was executed on the day assigned, and tradition relates that the Sisters were broken-hearted by the profanations they witnessed in their chapel in regard to the sacred vessels and other ornaments. During these sacrilegious performances Sister M. of the Infant Jesus Duquesne believed she saw a sacred particle in the corporal. Dissimulating her emotion she quietly asked them for the sacred linen. When they refused she renewed her petition with much eagerness, even going on her knees before them. Then one of the men, taking the corporal, gave it to her, saying: "We must satisfy this conceited lady who is crying for her fichu." The Sister was pleased and happy to gain her point, even at the expense of this humiliation, in order to avoid a new desecration of the Sacred Host, and she hastened to purify the corporal. Some of the Sisters returned to their families, fearing that if they all gathered in the same house the authorities would consider it illegal and disperse them again. Eleven professed of the choir, five Lay-Sisters and one Touriere lodged in an unfinished house on the banks of the Maine. A good notary had hired it for the Sisters in the name of his wife, who was supposed to form a boarding house; Sister of the Infant Jesus Duquesne directed the unloading of the furniture that the Commissaries allowed them to take.

The house thus depopulated was sold in the interests of the Nation, and later on demolished, for it had been in a ruinous state for a long time. By the act of the Revolution Saint Michael's no longer existed. God designed and decreed the rest. The young Sister who had seen to the furniture and its whereabouts was destined by Divine Providence to give later to this house a new life, and one more fruitful.

The Sisters had great consolation in their misfortune: they were not forced to disperse, and during those evil days were able to encourage and sustain each other. A special providence seemed to hover over them. The house on the banks of the Maine was surrounded by kitchen gardens. Poor people were very much attached to their own ideas. These poor people were very much afflicted by the extreme misery of the Sisters, and helped them in a thousand ways. The delicacy with which they helped them was a priceless boon to the nuns. One gave a fine bed of spinach, another passed vegetables over the wall. Obliged through sheer necessity some of the Sisters went out to glean in the fields, and the owners, imitating the charity of Booz, ordered the harvesters to leave them something to collect. One neighbor took such a liking to them that he guarded them every night with his gun, ready to defend them if any one tried to injure them. Often these poor stricken ones were obliged to prove that they were peaceable citizens, and in nowise dangerous to the Republic. Under such circumstances it was always necessary to pay witnesses; but these good neighbors were only too happy to testify for the Sisters, and never consented to receive any recompense.

It was necessary for them to wait a long time before the doors of the butcher and baker before they would be able to receive the meager portion the committee assigned to each inhabitant. In this circumstance also the Sisters had the happiness of finding compassionate friends. The butcher, who had remained a good Christian, found many an opportunity to serve them. The market women were not less kind to them. When the dearth of food was at its height in the poor Community the Sister charged with procuring provisions dressed herself in their costume, and imitating their language, she mixed herself up with the other poor people, and obtained more easily what she required. The most difficult part was the actual paying of expenses. On one occasion there was no money at all, and the econome owed several debts in the different booths on the market square. The poor econome did not dare present herself before them. However, her needs were urgent, and she must face the music, in whatever key it might be given her; what was her surprise when she heard herself called from different places: "Come on, little one; it is such a long time since we saw you. We suppose it is because you have no payment. Well, we won't talk about that; you don't owe us anything; take this, and you can pay when you're able."

Sister M. of Saint Eulalia was ordinarily charged with the purchases in the market. One day she forgot to bring the civic insignia required by the Government. Having arrived in front of the post of the National Guard the sentinel called out harshly: "Citizen, thy cockade." The Sister, already inured to war, was not disconcerted, but with a sudden movement she escaped, crying out to the National Guard: "When you clean my shoes you shall have it, you understand." Some days later Father Philibert, parish priest, came to see how the Community was faring. Perceiving Sister M. of Saint Eulalia he saluted her with these words: "Citizen, thy cockade." She then recognized the functionary who tried to frighten her a few days before. This clergyman, like many other priests, was one of the National Guard, and recognizing the Sister; he wanted to see if she was capable of braving the revolutionary troubles, and was pleased to see that she was already accustomed to them. The Community enjoyed this little incident.

Sister M. of Saint Denis Moleon did not show herself less courageous. Going out one day she perceived a fine crucifix in the store of a dealer in bric-a-brac. This profanation was too much for her glowing faith; she bought the crucifix and took it home with her to the Community without reflecting on the danger she was running. The Sisters were delighted with her purchase, and gave it a place of honor, with their fervent homage in reparation for the insults it had previously received. It was their consolation in their days of sorrow, as well as the letters of Father Montaigue, of whom we shall speak soon; he taught them to meditate and appreciate the treasures they found in the cross. Today this identical crucifix ornaments the Community room of the new Saint Michael.

Thanks to the courage and kindness of all those around them the Sisters were able to relieve the miseries of others. They continued to help the faithful priests, and they, in exchange for the material bread, gave them the spiritual bread of the Divine Word and the Sacraments. Father Montaigue was a priest of the Seminary of Saint Sulpice and the ordinary director of Sister M. of the Infant Jesus Duquesne, and it was he who ordinarily acquitted himself of this ministry. The correspondence of this holy and able director has been largely conserved. It is the best proof of the fidelity of the Sisters in acquitting themselves of the Rules and observances of the religious life. We found in them counsels for annual retreats, the renovation of the vows, the worthy celebration of the principal feasts, and of the Divine Heart of Jesus in particular on October 20th.

Their zeal in spreading this devotion during those dangerous times placed them in great peril. They had given pictures of the Sacred Heart to a noble lady who had been arrested. In searching her the guardians found the pictures, and they asked her where she got them. This lady had the weakness to say she got them from the Sisters; they asked her to tell them the number and give them the address of the Sisters. Presently the members of the Tribunal cried out that the Sisters were *Vendeennes*, and shouted terrible threats against them. A priest assisted at this judgment; he immediately warned the Community that a domiciliary visit was to be made them. They hid all the pictures, images and other objects of devotion. Happily for the Sisters they forgot all about them, and contrary to all their expectations they were left quiet. It would be easy to attach this fact to the propaganda established by Father Hebert before his death. This Father, who confessed Mme. de Moleon, mother of the parish priest of Saint-Severin, gave her, himself, a copy of the vow of Louis XVI. We have seen that there was a Religious of that name at Saint Michael; we think they belonged to the same family.

Father Montaigue had been incarcerated with Father Emery and the Sulpicians at the time when the decree went forth against the priests who refused to take the oath. They were all delivered from their prison under singular circumstances. Madame de Beauharnais had made the acquaintance of Father Montaigue, the Annals tell us, and conceived much esteem for him. She was a relative of Fouquier-Tinville, the too celebrated impeacher of the Revolutionary Tribunal. She had requested several times the release of all the Sulpicians, without being able to gain her point, when she learned one day that her terrible relative received at his table the other members of that Tribunal. Without losing time Mme. de Beauharnais went to the house of Fouquier-

Tinville, entered the festive hall, and closing the door with a key, declared to all these monsters that she would open the door for them when they would set all the Sulpicians at liberty. Surprised by this strange proceeding Fouquier-Tinville and his guests made some difficulty about it at first, but finished by yielding. Mme. de Beauharnais, taking the order they had given her, hastened to the prison. The jailer was a man who knew the judges very well and hastened to open the doors for those who were the objects of this rare favor without giving them time to finish their repast. It was well they were hurried, for scarcely had Madame left her cousin's house than the members and himself wrote out a counter order, and it arrived just as Madame and the prisoners left the prison. Once at liberty Father Montaigue continued his attempts to obtain the freedom of Father Emery, by offering a large sum of money to Fouquier-Tinville. After a short absence from Paris this courageous priest went back there to exercise his holy ministry, and was inscribed in the National Guard. When he was exposed to the danger of mounting guard, contrary to his conscience, a kind doctor gave him a certificate of exemption. The Sister Annalist said that the doctor could easly do so without telling a falsehood, for the health of Father Montaigue had become very bad on account of his mortifications and his excessive labors. This faithful friend bestowed incessant care on the Community of Saint Michael at the price of a thousand sacrifices.

The venerated Father Lemoine did not abandon them either. This good superior, doubtless on account of his advanced age, went through those evil days without being materially troubled. The Sisters had the happiness of keeping him until their installation in the street called Our Lady of the Fields.

Among those priests who bestowed care upon the Sisters the Annals make mention of a young Carmelite, pious as an angel and full of zeal and charity. He disappeared all at once and the Sisters, after searching for a long time for him, learned to their sorrow that he had perished with several others in a powder factory, where he worked for his livelihood.

After spending one year in the Chausee-du-Maine the Sisters were sent to the former Oratory, Saint James' Street. There their good friends of the garden came to visit them, and asked permission if they could not come to see them occasionally. On these occasions they used to bring the Sisters many presents, such as fine luscious fruit and vegetables of all kinds. These presents were gratefully received, for the Community had much to suffer from poverty. The Sisters celebrated the Golden Jubilee of Mother M. of the Heart of Jesus de la Greve, and the menu was composed of millet soup.

The greatest trial the Sisters experienced during this time was the exile of this good Mother. She belonged to the nobility, and in this quality she was ordered banished from Paris. The coachman who witnessed the grief of the Sisters, when they bade her farewell, could not restrain his tears; he showed more regard for the poor exile, and asked to be given the honor of bringing her back when her return would be authorized. He really had that pleasure, just a month later, when Sister Duquesne obtained, by dint of pleading and prayers, a waver upon the prohibition.

The Sisters lived in the midst of fiery Jacobins while in the Oratory; however, they were never seriously disquieted. Nearly every day a faithful priest celebrated Mass for them. In order not to attract attention they used to change the hour for celebrating. One day the faithful sacristan, who had always followed him, forgot to come to serve the Mass. A Sister went out to look for him, but in the darkness she missed the door and ran into a rabid revolutionary. This man, to the demand of the Sister, responded: "I'm going." Great was the terror of the little Community when they saw him enter. But he, without appearing to perceive anything unusual, served the priest at the altar as if he was always accustomed to it. At the end of the Holy Sacrifice he told the priest to be quiet, for though he came there with evil intentions he felt all at once completely changed. After that his friendship for the Sisters never diminished.

The priests that took the oath were the bitterest enemies of the little Community. The church of the Oratory was the place where their assembly gathered for their services, and there was only a partition between them and the house the Sisters occupied. They tried hard to make them assist at their sacriligious ceremonies. Very soon, enlightened by the energetic stand those Sisters took, and their total abstention from the company of the renegades, the Christians who assisted at these ceremonies saw that their teaching was erroneous, that they were being deceived, and stopped going to the church altogether, so they were soon without a congregation. To wreak their vengeance on the Sisters they profaned the holy relics with which the chapel was enriched. A courageous person hindered them from throwing the bones of the holy martyrs, Januarius and Bonnet, into the Seine; after having kept them in his home, where he guarded these precious relics some time, he told three Oratorians who had remained faithful, and they were presented to the Community.

In the month of January, 1796, the Community received the order to evacuate the house they occupied; the announcement was made in the roughest manner possible. They were given eight days to prepare; the time had expired; the movables were seized. Sister M. of the Infant Jesus Duquesne, after many painful attempts, at length found on the street called Our Lady of the Fields, at No. 1466, a house composed of two *Corps de logis,* which could be easily converted into a cloister, but the rent was 4,000 frances, an enormous sum for poor Religious. Pressed from sheer necessity they thought they would take it, trusting the payment to Divine Providence.

However, it appeared that this change of residence was clearly His work; the Community was installed regularly in the lower floor of the building, and they would let the first floor to lodgers. It was here that the good Father Superior, M. Lemoine, as well as other ecclesiastics and boarders came to lodge. The Sisters commenced to receive some young pupils; times became more tranquil, and the chapel they erected became a place of reunion for the faithful. A Bishop performed the ceremony of ordination there in the greatest secrecy, giving thus to the Church some new workers in place of those who proved unfaithful. Thus the Church, ever living, began to arise from the ruin of her sanctuaries.

Since their expulsion from their monastery the Sisters had lost in the Chausee-du-Maine Mother M. of Saint Michael Guillouzou. This respectable Sister was in her ninetieth year. She had been superioress at the Saint Michael and at the Madeleine. The amiability of her character made her the charm of their gatherings. This precious virtue remained with her through life, notwithstanding the deafness with which she was afflicted.

Sister M. of Saint Hippolyte Bonton, died in the house of the Oratory, but the cruelest sufferings of the Community and the hardest sacrifices were their portion in the house in the street of Our Lady of the Fields. In 1793 it lost Sister M. of the Nativity Mouchard, last Prioress of the Madeleine, the Touriere Sister M. Madeleine, whose devotedness was at its height during those evil days. That same year Sister M. of Saint Adrien Maupin, Sister M. of Saint Paul Sandron and the good Mother M. of the Heart of Jesus de la Greve went to receive the crown of their selfless lives; the last-named expired sweetly on Holy Saturday while they were saying the Office in the chapel—that is, the morning Office; she was aged seventy-eight years and had lived sixty years in the religious life.

Mother M. of the Infant Jesus Duquesne was regularly elected to succeed her. The recital of her imprisonment and of her relations with Napoleon I belong to the modern history of Our Lady of Charity. It is to this history that belongs the task of showing the considerable influence of this great Religious on the renovation and propagation of the Institute.

CONCLUSION

THE reader knows now the origin of Our Lady of Charity. Perhaps it may be judged that we have gone a little beyond our limits. The title of our book would seem to indicate as much. However, we do not think that we merit this reproach. You should study the history of some monasteries existing before the Revolution and thus find out how religious fervor was kept up, so as to understand the marvelous expansion the Order has taken in our century.

The recital of the many foundations, of which we give a list, contains the same examples of poverty, obedience and charity, even to heroism. We shall see there, in a yet more sensible manner, the action of Divine Providence multiplying the works of the Blessed John Eudes, as fast as the needs of souls demanded. We can contemplate the miracles of grace that transformed the most degraded souls into true Magdalens. There remains to us the hope that this history shall one day contribute to the glory of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, the Divine Inspirers and Protectors of their ardent apostle, the Blessed John Eudes, their docile instrument in this foundation.

* * *

MONASTERIES OF OUR LADY OF CHARITY OF THE REFUGE

FIRST HOUSE OF THE ORDER ERECTED IN 1641.

FRANCE—Caen. Rennes. LaRochelle. Chevilly, Paris. Versailles. Saint Brieux. Nantes. Lyonns. Valence. Toulouse. La Mans. Blois. Montauban. Marseilles. Marseilles II. Valognes. Besancon.

SPAIN—Bilbao.

ITALY— Loretto.

AUSTRIA—Salzbourg.

MEXICO—Saltillo. Monterey.

IRELAND—Dublin. Dublin II.

ENGLAND—Bartestre, Hereford. Waterlooville. Northfield, Birmingham. Troy, Monmouth; Here. Ormskirk, Southport. Redcote, Southampton.

CANADA—Ottawa. Toronto. Vancouver, B. C. Edmonton, P. A.

UNITED STATES—Buffalo, N. Y. Pittsburg, Pa. Wheeling, W. Va. Pittsburg, Pa., II. Buffalo, N. Y., II. Green Bay, Wis. San Antonio, Tex. Dallas, Tex. Hot Springs, Ark.

MONASTERIES OF THE CONGREGATION OF OUR LADY OF CHARITY OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD OF ANGERS

FRANCE—Angers (Mother House). Poitiers. Grenoble. Saint-Hilary-Saint-Florent. Nancy. Amiens. Lille. Le-Puy-En-Velay. Sens. Rheims. Arles. Nice. Chambrey. Perpignan I. Perpignan II. Avignon. Bourges. Paris. Toulon. Lyonns. Dole. Loos. Saint-Omer. Moulins. Angouleme. Annonay. Arras. Nazareth. Cholet. Orleans. Bastia. Ecully. Pau. Lourdes. Metz. Borny.

ALGERIA—El-Biar (Provincial House). Miserghin. Constantine.

ITALY—Rome (Provincial House). Rome (Lauretana). Capoue. Viterbo. Villanova. Portici. Rome. Chieti. Lecce. Lecce (Porta Napoli).

PROVINCE OF TURIN—Turin (Provincial House). Imola. Bologne. Modena. Genes. Reggio-Emilia. Forli. Monza. Turin. Triest.

PROVINCE OF MALTA—Malta (Provincial House). Messina. Palermo I. Acireale. Palermo II.

BELGIUM—Evere-Lez-Bruxelles (Provincial House). Mons. Namur. Louvain. Tertibut. Bury.

HOLLAND—Leiderdorf (Provincial House.) Harlem. Velp. Tilburg.

GERMANY—Munich (Provincial House). Mayence. Ettmannsdorf. Alstatten. Munster. Marienfelde. Breslau. Almelo. Reinickendorf. Marxheim. Beuthen. Bocholdt. Kattern. Cologne-Melaten. Aix-La-Chapelle. Treves. Modenheim. Coblentz. Junkersdorf. Strasbourg.

AUSTRIA—Neudorf. Baumgartenberg. Graz. Harbach. Buda-Pest. Theresienfeld (Provincial House).

ENGLAND—East Finchley, London (Provincial House). London, Hammersmith. Bristol. Glasgow. Liverpool. Manchester. Cardiff. Newcastle-On-Tyne. Ashford, Middlesex. Wavertree, Liverpool.

IRELAND—Limerick (Provincial House). Waterford. New Ross. Belfast. Cork. Clifton, Cork.

SPAIN, PORTUGAL AND MEXICO—Barcelone (Provincial House). Porto, Portugal. Lisbon, Portugal. Mexico. Guanajuato, Mexico. Madrid, Spain. San Fernando, Spain. Seville, Spain.

ASIA—Bangalore. Bangalore City. Bellary. Rangoon I. Rangoon II. Rangoon III. Colombo. Mysore. Kandy. Colombo II. Negombo. Newera-Elyia.

AFRICA—Cairo. Cairo II. Port Said. Suez. Hammana. Port Said II. Johannesburg.

CANADA—Montreal (Provincial House). Montreal II. Saint Hubert. Montreal III. Halifax. Saint John. Laval-des-Rapids. Winnipeg.

UNITED STATES—Saint Louis, Mo. New Orleans, La. Chicago, Ill., I. Memphis, Tenn. Milwaukee, Wis. Havana, Cuba. Normandy, Mo. Kansas City, Mo. Chicago, Ill., II. Peoria, Ill. Havana, Cuba. Sioux City, Ia. Los Angeles, Cal. Philadelphia, Pa. West Philadelphia, Pa. Norristown, Pa. Scranton, Pa. Reading, Pa. Germantown, Pa. Carthage, O. Louisville, Ky. Cincinnati, O. Columbus, O. Newport, Ky. Louisville, Ky., II. Cleveland, O. Indianapolis, Ind. Detroit, Mich. Grand Rapids, Mich. Toledo, O. New York, N. Y. Boston, Mass. Peekskill, N. Y. Brooklyn, N. Y. Newark, N. J. Troy, N. Y. Albany, N. Y. Springfield, Mass. Hartford, Conn. Providence, R. I. Baltimore, Md., I. Baltimore, Md., II. Washington, D. C. Saint Paul, Minn. Denver, Colo. Helena, Mont. Seattle, Wash. Omaha, Neb. Portland, Ore. Dubuque, Ia. Spokane, Wash.

SOUTH AMERICA—Santiago, Chili. San Felipe. Valparaiso. Talea. Santiago II. Curico. Quillota. Santiago III. Santiago IV. Los Anjeles. Chillan. Conception. Cauquenes. Rancagua. Santiago V. Constitution. Valparaiso II. Linares. La Serena. Ovalle. Iquique. Coquimbo. Copiapo. Lima, Peru. Lima II. La Paz. Lima III. Quito, Equator. Cuenca. Bogota, Colombo. Medellin. Bogota II. Buenos Aires. Montevideo. Mendoza. Cordova. San Luis. San Juan. Tueuman. Jujui. Buenos Aires II. Rosario de Santa Fe. Salta. Buenos Aires III. Catamarca. Buenos aires IV. Montevideo II. Rio Cuarto. La Plata. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Bahia. Sao Paulo. Juiz de Fora.

OCEANICA—Melbourne, Australia. Oakleigh, Australia. Christ Church, New Zealand. South Melbourne, Australia. Hobart-Mount St. Canice, Tas. Perth, W. Australia. Bendigo, Victoria. Sydney, Australia,

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Origin of the order of Our Lady of Charity.

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